



*Office of the Bishop*

January 13, 2019  
*The Baptism of the Lord*

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace be with you!

It is exciting to share with you the fruit of the Diocesan Visioning Process. **First, thank you** to all who prayed for this visioning process and to those who personally shared with me your hopes and concerns at last summer's listening sessions. Over the subsequent months, I met with our Visioning Team, supported by your insights and prayers, to discern the path forward for our diocese.

I was struck by three overwhelming needs: unity within the diocese, healing on many levels and a desire to become more effective disciples of Jesus Christ so our Church will grow. Consequently:

*Our Vision is being **One Family**:* unity is also what God wants for us: to know we are His Family and to know that Jesus is the person that holds us together.

*Our Vision is being **Restored in Christ**:* the longing for healing is also what God desires for us and why he sent his Son, Jesus. Healing was at the heart of Jesus' ministry. Just like in Jesus' time, today healing is both personal and cultural. As individuals and parishes, locally as a diocese and universally as one Catholic Church, there is a profound need for healing and the freedom it brings.

*Our Vision is being **Equipped for Mission**:* there is a desire to understand and pursue our baptismal call as disciples, capable of bringing others to Jesus' Sacred Heart, the place of true unity and healing. In fact, this is the very mission Jesus gave to each one of us baptized in His name.

And so, our Vision is this: ***One Family: Restored in Christ – Equipped for Mission***. It comes from you and is solidly grounded in our faith.

If we know where we are going, how do we purposefully get there?



**Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph at The Catholic Center**

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We discerned 3 Priorities (areas of focus) and within each priority are exciting and ambitious goals to pursue that will make measurable progress toward the vision.

I am so convinced of these priorities that I intend them to shape each family and household, and every parish over the next 3-5 years. First, through shared reflection and commitment and, second, by shared action and a movement toward our Mutually Shared Vision.

Finally, a word about **why this is important**. We are living under the cloud that has been brought about by the sins of some of the shepherds.

And, we are at a point in our history when we have been living off the spiritual capital of past generations which might seem to be winding down. In an age when we are often tempted to apathy and to settle for “getting by” we risk settling for living “small.” This is not from the Holy Spirit and leads to a sterile Church.

Instead, I ask you to join me taking the Vision to heart and mind. Ultimately, this is not about what we do, but **what God will do *through us* as we open ourselves up to the power of His love and life**. We have set an ambitious course for ourselves, but I believe this is the path to renewal and deeper unity.

**To prepare ourselves spiritually**, I am designating a **DIOCESAN HOLY YEAR** to begin on *Ash Wednesday* of this year (March 6, 2019) and conclude on the *Feast of the Baptism of the Lord* (January 12, 2020).

This Holy Year will be marked by common prayer and observances so that we can open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and “*be transformed by the renewal of [our minds],*” that we “*may prove what is the will of God*” (*cf.* Romans 12:2). You will be hearing more about this soon.

Invoking the love and intercession of our diocesan patrons, Mary, the Immaculate Conception, Saint Joseph, her spouse, and Saint John Francis Regis, I am,

Fraternally yours in Christ,



Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph