



CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 5, 2018

Dear Fathers, Parish Life Coordinators and Parish Directors,

Almost 17 years ago, in 2001, Bishop Raphael Fliss guided us with his pastoral letter entitled A New Springtime about the future of our local church. That pastoral letter followed a 1982 Bishop Hammes and Monsignor Heslin plan called 2000 Here We Come, which provided the guiding principles that our Diocese followed for two decades, such as: parish clusters were organized, lay formation programs began, Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils became important parts of parish life, and the laity became more involved in the ministry and governance of parishes.

In the years 2000 – 2001, Bishop Fliss responded to the challenge from Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the world to prepare for a “new springtime” of Christian life by planning the stages of the journey ahead for their local churches. Bishop Fliss and his staff made an assessment of our Diocesan strengths and our weaknesses, and, by the document A New Springtime, proclaimed a vision and asked the priests and lay people to design a plan with attainable goals and objectives. Each Deanery of the Diocese of Superior met with priests, lay leaders, trustees, parish council members and other parishioners to discuss the current state of the diocese at that time, and to discuss how we might work together to better minister with a decreasing number of clergy.

As we now approach the year 2020, I feel that it is time to reassess our strengths, opportunities and challenges. After several months of consultation with our Presbyteral Council and diocesan staff, I now invite each of you to join me in responding to the same challenge by Saint Pope John Paul II. I urge you to prayerfully read the attached copy of Bishop Fliss’ 2001 A New Springtime, with the idea that it may guide our present and future in the Diocese of Superior. That pastoral letter contains great wisdom, and I believe it remains valid and helpful. As times and situations change, we may need to change, too. I encourage you to positively embrace, and participate in, our plan “A New Springtime Revisited” to convene Deanery meetings in August – September. We will begin to strategically plan for our next 10 – 20 years of the Catholic Church’s ministry to the people of the Diocese of Superior.

With the deanery meetings being planned for August and September, please share this information with parish leadership and parishioners as soon as possible. We want to involve all priests, deacons, religious, lay ministers, trustees, council members and current and emerging parish leaders. I encourage you to extend special invitations to young adults ages 20 – 40. I ask you to join with me in taking a positive leadership role in this initiative. Trusting in God’s guidance, together with the faithful of the Diocese, we will be able to move forward in confidence and hope. I also ask your daily prayers as we begin this most necessary endeavor. Thank you in advance for your work.

Saint Augustine, our Patron, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Most Rev. James P. Powers
Bishop of Superior