



## ***Let our Hearts be 'In-Spired' for Mission: A Pastoral Letter on the Holy Spirit***

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*Jesus said to His Apostles: The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, Whom the Father will send in My Name, will instruct you in everything and remind you of all that I told you....and when the Holy Spirit comes, whom I will send to you, being the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you to all truth. (John 14:26; 16:13)*

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be My witnesses even to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:9)*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Over the course of the sixteen years I have been blessed to be a Bishop, one of my most frequent responsibilities, and truly a most enjoyable privilege, has been to be the Celebrant of the Sacrament of Confirmation for over 22,000 young people and adults. Over those years, every time I have prayed over them, and ceremoniously “lain my hands” upon the Candidates to be confirmed, and said: “*Send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord*”; and then when I have anointed their foreheads with Sacred Chrism, and said: “*Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit*”, I have been so very grateful and humbled to be the human instrument of bringing the Power-filled Life of the Holy Spirit into these young people’s lives, filling them with His Seven-fold Gifts.

Our Church teaches that through our Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Spirit dwells within all of us. As individuals, and as a Church, we are called to recognize His presence and to ask ourselves: to what degree are we opening ourselves to the work of the Spirit of God within us through His Gifts? To what degree are our lives bearing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit in what we think, say and do? How are we allowing the Holy Spirit within us to ***in-spire*** us to realize that as baptized and confirmed Catholics, we are called to share in Jesus’ ***Mission***, which He has entrusted to the Church to continue, which means that Jesus has entrusted His mission also to us as members of the Body of Christ. Therefore, my Sisters and Brothers in Christ, with this Pastoral Letter, I ask you to reflect with me on this Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit of God; I ask you to “***Let your hearts be in-spired for Mission.***”

## INTRODUCTION

### Why should we have this special “Year of the Holy Spirit”?

A little less than two years ago, on Saturday, October 19, 2019, our Diocese celebrated a Eucharistic Congress. Close to 1,000 representatives from parishes in our nine counties of southwest Michigan gathered at the Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo for a historic day, opened with a beautiful celebration of Holy Mass, followed by a number of catechetical breakout sessions, discussion groups, all-day Eucharistic adoration, concluding with a public procession around the streets of Kalamazoo with the Blessed Sacrament, singing and giving praises to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Following this wonderful event, I wrote all of you a Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist entitled *Loving God and Our Neighbor: Living the Mission of the Eucharist*. The purpose of that letter was to invite all members of our entire Diocese to reflect prayerfully on the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist, which is Christ’s Gift of Himself to us under the form of Bread and Wine, which are transformed by the words of Consecration and the power of the Holy Spirit into the Body and Blood of Jesus, to be our Food and Drink for our Journey of Faith.

In that pastoral letter on the Eucharist, I announced a “**Year of the Eucharist**” during the calendar year 2020 in the Diocese of Kalamazoo. I described the purpose of this special year as follows:

*My Sisters and Brothers, the Eucharist is the key that allows us to unlock and embrace our understanding of Jesus’ vision. I believe with all my heart that He is calling us to become one with Him in Holy Communion and to become His joyful missionary disciples, proclaiming His message of love, justice, mercy, and peace to everyone we meet.*

*Therefore, in order to continue the promotion of Jesus’ mission that flows from the Eucharist and our outreach to those in need through works of charity and justice, I am pleased to announce a Year of the Eucharist in our diocese during calendar year 2020....*

*In light of the significant lack of clarity in our own Catholic people’s minds about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the clear evidence of enthusiasm and energy of those who recently attended the Eucharistic Congress, the time is right for our diocese to devote an entire year to a greater understanding of and a deeper love and devotion for Jesus’ Presence among us, and a new or renewed awareness of what our responsibility is to live a Eucharistic life of loving service.*

What none of us could have possibly foreseen was what 2020—the year of the COVID-19 pandemic’s greatest impact—would be like for us. Our observance of the “Year of the Eucharist” was interrupted and substantially changed by the sad realities that our churches were closed for public celebrations of Holy Mass for several months, and the vast majority of Catholics in our Diocese and throughout the world were denied access to the actual reception of Christ’s Body and Blood for an extended period of time. Some have called this period “The Great Eucharistic Fast”. All our priests continued celebrating daily Mass on behalf of the Faithful, and most were

able to livestream the Mass to their parishioners; however, the nourishment and strength of the Eucharist was not readily available to most Catholics.

During that entire time of the pandemic, and especially during the lockdown, I sensed the abiding Presence of the Holy Spirit with us; we were never alone or abandoned. In fact, I believe the Holy Spirit inspired a hunger in all of us. It was a hunger for the Eucharist, and a hunger for a deeper openness to the Holy Spirit. I am convinced that it was the Holy Spirit Who sustained our Diocese throughout those many months of the COVID-19 pandemic, through the amazing Gifts that the Holy Spirit bestowed so generously upon each of us. Acting as our Advocate, our Comforter and our unailing Guide, the Holy Spirit--the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity-- always encourages us in difficult times and strengthens us when we are weary or discouraged. The past 18 months has challenged us as individuals, families, parish communities, and as a Diocese to reexamine our fundamental beliefs and principles. And it has also invited us to reaffirm, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, our commitment to the Baptismal promises we renew each year at the Easter Vigil.

During the particular challenges of this time, we have learned once again what Jesus continues to ask us to do: *To faithfully, and joyfully, carry out our mission to love God with all our mind, heart and strength, and to love our neighbor as Jesus loves us.* We have also been reminded that God does not test us beyond our strength, nor without giving us the assistance we need to successfully overcome the many obstacles that we experience in our lives (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). As Jesus teaches us: *"All things are possible with God"* (Mt. 19:26). His Grace comes to us in a variety of ways in the diverse circumstances of our lives; but the two most powerful sources of grace in our daily lives as Christians come from the **Eucharist** and the **Holy Spirit**.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **TWO INSEPARABLE GIFTS: THE EUCHARIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT**

***"From the beginning to the end of time, whenever God sends His Son, He always sends His Spirit: Their mission is conjoined and inseparable."* (CCC #743)**

In His infinite love for us, God the Father sent God the Son in the Person of Jesus by the power of God the Holy Spirit to overcome the challenges we will most certainly encounter on our earthly pilgrimage. Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gives Himself to us in the Sacraments – most powerfully in the Mystery of the Eucharist - and at Pentecost gave us the Holy Spirit. Who comes to us in the spiritual Gifts we receive when we open our minds and hearts to God's love.

As a Community of Faith, each of us is called to be a faithful follower of Jesus, Who sums up the Law and the Prophets in "the Great Commandment": to love God and to love our neighbor. (Mt. 22:34-40) And that means that we are called to feed those who are hungry in mind, body and spirit, and to heal the mental, physical and spiritual wounds of all God's people. We cannot accomplish this mission by our own efforts. We must rely on the spiritual strength of the Eucharist and on our Lord's promise that He will send the Holy Spirit to give us all the graces we need to be faithful to our mission.

When we recently celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our beloved Diocese of Kalamazoo on July 21, 2021, I described our Diocese's mission as we move into our second 50 years as follows: *"To transform the world by sharing the love of Christ with our neighbors."* To accomplish this mission, we must be centered on the extraordinary Gift that Jesus gave us: the strength and spiritual stamina we receive from the most *Holy Eucharist*. Our hearts must be **on fire** with love

for Jesus and with a willingness to continue Jesus' vision of establishing God's Kingdom here in the nine counties of southwest Michigan and throughout the whole world. And the only way we can do that is by relying on Jesus' second, extraordinary Gift of the *Holy Spirit* to lead us boldly and confidently into our next half century as the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

### **Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit**

With this in mind, and because of the inseparable connection between the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit, I have announced a special "***Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit***" to begin on August 28, 2021, the Feast of St. Augustine, our diocesan patron, and to culminate on the Solemnity of Pentecost, June 5, 2022. This special Year will call upon the Holy Spirit to bestow upon our Diocese His seven-fold Gifts to help us be renewed in our love for Jesus, for our faith, and to help us to become those joyful and courageous missionary disciples Jesus needs us to be. It is my profound hope that this Year of the Holy Spirit will enflame our hearts and souls with a fervent desire to be faithful to the call we have received from Christ to: "*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*" (Matt. 28:19-20)

As we enter into this "Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit", I invite you to join with me in prayerfully reflecting on the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, sometimes called "the Breath of God," Who comes to us in prayer, in the Sacraments and in all our efforts to carry out the "Great Commandment". Although the Holy Spirit is always with us, we do not ordinarily see or feel His presence. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains:

"Now God's Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, His Word, His living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of Himself. The Spirit who "has spoken through the prophets" makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit Himself. We know Him only in the movement by which He reveals the Word to us and disposes us to welcome Him in faith. The Spirit of truth who "unveils" Christ to us "will not speak on His own." (CCC #687)

The Holy Spirit is hidden and unheard in Himself, but through Him we can hear the voice of God the Father, and we can see Christ, God's only Son, especially in the Eucharist.

Sacred Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit using images, such as *Wind, Fire, and a Dove*, that describe for us how the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity relates to the Father and the Son. He is the Love that proceeds from the Father and from the Son, and that binds the Three Persons in One God together. These scriptural images also help us to better understand how the Holy Spirit transforms us, who are called by our Baptism to be the missionary disciples of Jesus Christ; to help us to move away from being spiritual cowards, weak and ineffective human beings, into what Pope Francis calls "Spirit-filled evangelizers," women and men who boldly sacrifice our own comfort and security for the sake of building up God's Kingdom and proclaiming His Word to all people.

If the Holy Spirit is ever-present but usually unseen, how do we come to know Him? We come to know Him through the Church, as this powerful teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states so clearly:

*The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:  
~ in the Scriptures He inspired;*

- ~ *in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses;*
- ~ *in the Church's Magisterium, which He assists;*
- ~ *in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ;*
- ~ *in prayer, wherein He intercedes for us;*
- ~ *in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up;*
- ~ *in the signs of apostolic and missionary life;*
- ~ *in the witness of saints through whom He manifests His holiness and continues the work of salvation. (CCC #688)*

In short, the Holy Spirit is present and active everywhere the Church is. And even when the sins and failures of human beings (all of us) get in the way of carrying out the Church's mission, the Holy Spirit is with us working to renew, restore and heal our brokenness so that we can continue our efforts to live the mission of the Eucharist by loving God and our neighbor.

## **CHAPTER TWO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SACRED SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION**

The Old Testament image of "God's breath" helps us to understand how the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity gives Himself to us. The Holy Spirit is like the spiritual air we breathe which makes life possible. Just as natural breathing fills our bodies with the oxygen that is absolutely necessary to sustain life, when we receive the Holy Spirit we are filled with the grace we must have in order to live authentic spiritual lives in Christ.

"Spirit" is the translation of the Hebrew word *ruah* which means breath, air, or wind. In the New Testament, Jesus uses the image of wind to suggest to Nicodemus (Jn 3:5-8) the transcendent newness of the Holy Spirit who is God's breath. When our Lord promises that He will send the Holy Spirit to His disciples (all of us), He uses the term "Paraclete" which literally means "one who stands beside us" as an advocate. Jesus also refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter" and "the Spirit of Truth."

Different titles and images are used by the four Gospel Writers and by St. Paul.

*Besides the proper name of "Holy Spirit," which is most frequently used in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, we also find in St. Paul the titles: the Spirit of the promise, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord, and the Spirit of God and, in St. Peter, the Spirit of glory. (CCC #693)*

All of these titles help us to understand the mystery of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity who is sent by God the Father and by His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to unite us, to make us holy, and to empower us to carry out the Divine Mission, which we first received at the time of our Baptism, and which is renewed at Confirmation, and each time we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The joint mission of Jesus, the Father's Word, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, remains hidden, but it is always at work in the world and in our individual lives. In the Old Testament, God's Spirit prepares the world for the coming of the Messiah. Both the Messiah and the Spirit who prepares for Him are promised, to be watched for and welcomed at their manifestation in the fullness of time. So, for this reason, when the Church reads the Old Testament, she searches there for what the Spirit, "who has spoken through the prophets," wants to tell us about Christ.

*By "prophets" the faith of the Church here understands all whom the Holy Spirit inspired in living proclamation and the composition of the sacred books, both of the Old and the New Testaments. Jewish tradition distinguishes first the Law (the five first books of the Bible or Pentateuch), then the Prophets (our historical and prophetic books) and finally the Writings, especially the Wisdom literature, in particular the Psalms. (CCC #702)*

While there are many different human writers of the books of the Bible who employ various literary styles, our Catholic faith assures us that the Holy Spirit is the single unifying source and, therefore, the Divine Author of everything we read in Sacred Scripture.

The same is true for the New Testament; we see the Holy Spirit at work, especially in all four Gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles, and in Letters of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit is present at the Annunciation. Immediately following Mary's free assent to be the Mother of our Redeemer, by the Power of the Holy Spirit she conceives the Son of God in her womb. The Holy Spirit remains active, although hidden, throughout the years of Jesus' childhood and youth until as a mature man He is baptized by John in the Jordan.

As we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew:

*After Jesus was baptized, He came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for Him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon Him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased." (Mt.3:16-17)*

The Blessed Trinity is made manifest at the time of the Lord's Baptism, and the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a Dove, which in the New Testament and later Christian iconography becomes a popular image of the Holy Spirit Himself.

In St. John's Gospel (John 1:33–34), John the Baptist proclaims the coming of the Messiah, saying: "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon [Jesus]. I did not know Him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, He is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God."

Following the Lord's Baptism in the Jordan by John, Jesus is led into the desert by the Holy Spirit to be confronted by the Evil One (Mt 4:1, Mk 1:12, Lk 4:1). The Devil's temptations attempt unsuccessfully to challenge Jesus' true Identity. Twice the Devil says, "If you are the Son of God..." but Jesus forcefully resists the temptations to place His bodily needs, His security and His status as God's Son ahead of His mission. He has come to earth for a purpose—to suffer, die and rise again in reparation for our sins so that we might live forever in Him. We can be confident that the Holy Spirit did not lead Jesus into the desert only to abandon Him. Surely the Breath of God sustained Him for 40 days and 40 nights in the face of all the Devil's temptations.

Following the Temptation, Jesus, Who is Christ the Anointed One, inaugurates the proclamation of the Good News, taking on the passage from Isaiah 61:1–2 which He particularly chose at the beginning of His public ministry:

*The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good tidings to the afflicted;*

*he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor.*

At the end of that passage from the Prophet Isaiah, Jesus said: “*Today, this prophecy is fulfilled.*” (Lk.4:21)

The Holy Spirit was with Jesus during every moment of His ministry—His teaching, His healing, His miracles, and even His suffering and death. This helps to explain why our Lord was so insistent on sending His Spirit to be our Advocate after He returned to the Father. Without God’s help, we can do nothing. The Holy Spirit is the all-powerful assistance we need from our Father in Heaven and from our Risen Lord. The same Spirit makes possible the great Gift of the Eucharist, Christ’s Body and Blood, which nourishes and sustains us in our efforts to carry out Christ’s mission.

*“It is Christ Who, as Head of the Body, pours out the Spirit among us His members to nourish, heal, organize them, to give them life, to send them to bear witness.... Through the Church’s Sacraments, Christ communicates His Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of His Body.”* (CCC #739).

Our diocesan patron, St. Augustine of Hippo, was a brilliant theologian and a powerful preacher. His teaching on the Blessed Trinity, the Three Persons in One God, is perhaps the best reflection we have in our Catholic Tradition on the Mystery of God’s inner life. In his “*Treatise on the Trinity*”, St. Augustine says, quite simply, that the Holy Spirit is God’s Gift of Love.

*Wherefore, if Holy Scripture proclaims that God is love, and that love is of God, and works this in us that we abide in God and He in us, and that hereby we know this, because He has given us of His Spirit, then the Spirit Himself is God, who is love. Next, if there be among the gifts of God none greater than love, and there is no greater gift of God than the Holy Spirit, what follows more naturally than that He is Himself love, who is called both God and of God? And if the love by which the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father, ineffably demonstrates the communion of both, what is more suitable than that He should be specially called love, who is the Spirit common to both? For this is the sounder thing both to believe and to understand, that the Holy Spirit is not alone love in that Trinity; yet is not specially called love to no purpose (On the Trinity XV. 18.32, 19.37).*

### **CHAPTER 3 PENTECOST AND THE CHURCH**

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, was manifested to Jesus’ disciples in powerful ways. On this occasion, the Holy Spirit appeared as “a strong driving wind” and in “tongues of fire.” Those who received Him experienced a radical change.

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.*

*Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:2-4)*

What had been impossible for the weak and fearful disciples, was now able to be accomplished by them through the Power of the Holy Spirit. Without the help of God's grace, the disciples could not function. They were like uncharged cell phones or cars with dead batteries. Power came to them—as it does to us today—through another Source: the Power of the Holy Spirit.

The experience of Pentecost, the disciples' reception of the Holy Spirit, is what made it possible for the Church to be born and to become the Living Body of Christ. The Spirit manifests the Risen Lord to us, recalls His Word to us and opens our minds to the understanding of His Death and Resurrection. The Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Holy Eucharist, in order to reconcile us, and to bring us into communion with God, that we may "bear much fruit" (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #737).

All who have received the Holy Spirit are united in Christ as members of His Body, the Church. We are, in a sense, joined together so that we become one with God and with one another, without losing our dignity as individuals. This unity-in-diversity is the source of our strength. It is the Power of the Holy Spirit that allows us to accomplish great things in God's name.

*For if Christ, together with the Father's and his own Spirit, comes to dwell in each of us, though we are many, still the Spirit is one and undivided. He binds together the spirits of each and every one of us, . . . and makes all appear as one in Him. For just as the power of Christ's sacred flesh unites those in whom it dwells into one body...in the same way the one and undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in all, leads all into spiritual unity. (CCC #738)*

The first Christians were keenly aware of their helplessness in the face of all the obstacles that stood in their way. Fortunately, they had a powerful Advocate standing with them. "*The Spirit helps us in our weakness,*" St. Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, "*The Spirit too helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in speech.*" (Rom.8:26)

### **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

*Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church (CCC #2003).*

There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: "wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2). Each of these special Gifts that we receive from the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is intended to strengthen us in holiness and empower us to do God's Holy Will.

The Sacrament of Confirmation "increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit within us" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1303). When we are Confirmed, we are invited to spiritually mature and grow in our experience of the many gifts that the Holy Spirit provides to all Baptized Christians. When we freely cooperate with God's grace, we become more willing to listen to and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us to accomplish great things as we pursue our mission to love God and our neighbor. As St. Paul counsels us in the Letter to the Romans (12:6–8), *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

## **CHAPTER FOUR THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

While the number of Fruits vary; the results all give evidence of God’s Grace. In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul mentions nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: *“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control”* (Gal 5: 22,23).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: “The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists 12 of them: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.” (CCC #1832)

Wherever the Holy Spirit is received by a heart that is welcoming and cooperative, the fruits expand and intensify. Whenever an individual or a group follows the prompting of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, and the other fruits increase, but when the Spirit is opposed, these fruits diminish or vanish altogether.

Jesus taught about the importance of allowing our lives to bear “good fruit” when He said:

*Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them.”* (Mt. 7:17-20)

This passage helps us to understand the importance of living our daily lives in ways that are fruitful in the eyes of God, that bring glory to Him and His love to those whom we serve. During the Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit, we will be praying for the Divine Guidance we all need to cooperate with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit so that they can bear good fruit in our individual lives and in the life of our Diocese.

### **A Church Renewed: Eucharist-centered and On Fire with the Holy Spirit**

The gifts we receive from the Holy Spirit are sometimes referred to as “charisms.” A charism is a gift given by the Holy Spirit to individuals or groups with the Church for the purpose of building up the Church and enriching the life of the Spirit within her. Charisms can be distinguished from the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit described above because their focus is on the common life of the Church more than on the spiritual life of individuals. These Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit that are intended to gather, sanctify, and renew life in the Church and in the world.

At least 27 charisms are listed in Sacred Scripture (cf. Acts 2, 1 Cor 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4) covering a broad range of gifts, from prophecy and healing to mercy, teaching, almsgiving, perseverance, joy, encouragement, hospitality and leadership.

My hope for every Catholic in the Diocese of Kalamazoo, especially as we enter our second half century as a Local Church, is that we will be *reenergized* as Spirit-filled evangelizers, individual members of our diocesan-wide community of missionary disciples who are Eucharist-centered and “on fire” with the Power of the Holy Spirit.

For this to happen, we must become a charismatic Community of Faith, meaning that we need to make the appropriate use of the Holy Spirit’s Charisms. We must be *prophetic*—always speaking the truth with love. We must be *servant-leaders* who are willing to sacrifice our own comfort and security for the good of others. We must be joyful, bold, ardent and courageous *witnesses to Jesus’ Good News* in the midst of a world which is moving farther and father away from God, and many of whom do not know Jesus, the Christ. And we must be *People of Faith* whose faith in God is so strong and unwavering that we can accomplish impossible things—miracles of healing, reconciliation and peacemaking throughout our nine counties of southwest Michigan and beyond.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states so well:

*Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, Charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men (people), and to the needs of the world.*

*Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with **charity, the true measure of all charisms.** (#799-800)*

**Charity (Love) is “the true measure all charisms.”** Unless informed by God’s love, all our efforts to lead, to serve, to heal, to unite and to effect positive changes in our world are ineffective and ultimately doomed to fail. Only by the grace of God—experienced most powerfully in the Eucharist and in the Holy Spirit—can we succeed in carrying out the mission that Christ gave us to: “*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*” We are not called to conquer the world, or force people to change their minds. But we are called to be faithful to what we know to be the Truth, and we are also called to live our faith with conviction, not “*hiding the Light of Christ under a bushel basket, but letting it shine for all the world to see.*” (Mt.5:15) We should be an inspiration to others, most especially in how we love one another, and how we love all those who do not know Jesus. And the most direct way of demonstrating that love is by our willingness to serve the needs of all, especially those who are poor and in need, and who are overlooked by the rest of the world.

## **CHAPTER 5 THE PURPOSE OF THE JUBILEE YEAR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The purpose of our Diocese’s “Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit” is:

*To prayerfully beseech the Holy Spirit to pour out His abundant, powerful Gifts upon our Diocese, all our parishes, and each member of the Clergy and the Faithful.*

*Strengthened by the most Holy Eucharist, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we fervently pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire and enflame every member of the Clergy and Faithful with the Fire of His Love. We also pray that all of us will demonstrate a readiness and enthusiasm to **do** what Jesus asks of us: to love God and neighbor in word, in deed, and in fact. Then, mindful of Jesus' mission to the Apostles and to the Church, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, that we will renew our commitment to be courageous and joyful witnesses to Jesus and His Church in the world, with the goal of strengthening our own Faith, and of sharing our Faith with others.*

### **The Plan of Action for the Jubilee Year**

The only Plan of Action for us is to follow the Plan that the Holy Spirit wants to reveal to us. How do we do that? That can only take place by means of prayer and through spiritual discernment.

Following Jesus' example is another "plan of action". For us to do what Jesus taught us to do: to pray as Jesus prayed--constantly; to pray Jesus' primary prayer: "*Thy will be done*"; to pray with the same conviction of Jesus Who often told us: "*All things are possible with God.*"; and to pray for what Jesus prayed for most of all: "*Come, Holy Spirit, come!*"

Therefore, instead of a long list of activities, conferences, and special projects, I urge that our "Diocesan Plan of Action" for this **Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit** simply be: to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to pray that we will be docile and open to His guidance.

### **The Goal of this Jubilee Year**

The Goal of this Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit is to envelop our entire Diocese into a more intense life of Eucharistically-centered prayer, with the intention of calling upon the Holy Spirit to come upon our entire Diocese, and to open the hearts of every member of the clergy, and every member of the lay Faithful; to pray that we will allow the Holy Spirit to change what needs to be changed within us, purify what needs to be purified, and to help us all to follow where the Holy Spirit chooses to lead us.

### **To our Priests and Deacons:**

I urge all our priests and deacons, every day, to more intentionally pray for the Holy Spirit's inspiration in our preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

I also encourage all priests and deacons daily to spend quality time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

I personally ask every priest and deacon to join together for the nine Afternoons of Eucharistic Adoration and Reflection during the Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit.

### **To our Diocesan Staff and Parish Staffs:**

I urge you to pray for our Diocese and your Parish/Collaborative every day.

I urge you to join in special monthly Days of Eucharistic Prayer for the intention of our diocese, for a greater sense of welcoming to the stranger, and help to the poor and needy.

I urge you to find ways to intentionally be joyful witnesses of our Faith to all those you encounter.

**To every Parish/Collaborative:**

I ask every Parish/Collaborative to form a special Prayer Group, to be known as “the Cenacle”, reminiscent of the Upper Room where the Apostles and our Blessed Mother prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. I ask you to pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance for you and your family, for your parish, and for our Diocese.

I ask every Parish/Collaborative to take an inventory of how vibrant your parish outreach programs are, to review the ways in which you elicit the involvement of as many people as possible to allow our Faith to be put into loving action through the practice of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and to develop a plan to intensify and grow them within the life of each parish by Pentecost 2022.

**To all members of the Faithful of the Diocese of Kalamazoo:**

I ask you all to pray each day for the “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” that you particularly need; and by putting those Gifts to work, that your lives will bear “the Fruits of the Holy Spirit” in new ways.

I urge all of us to pray fervently the special **Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit** prayer we will pray at every Mass over these next nine months, and that you may also pray regularly in your own private prayer time.

I urge you to pray for an increase in Vocations to the Priesthood, Consecrated Life, and Sacramental Married Life.

## CONCLUSION

As we inaugurate this **Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit**, we seek the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was already “*full of Grace*” when the Holy Spirit first came to her at the Annunciation, and who said “Yes” to the Father’s Will for her. Her “*fiat*” allowed Mary to be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and, so, she become the Mother of God’s Only-begotten Son. In Mary, Mother of the Church, we have *the* perfect example of a *Spirit-filled evangelizer* whose every word and deed proclaim the greatness of God “*who has looked with favor on His lowly servant.*” Mary always shows us the way to her Son, Jesus. She teaches us to be constantly open to God’s Will and to be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit as she was.

Let us pray through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our Patron, St. Augustine, that this special year of prayer, reflection and action will be fruitful—in accordance with God’s Holy Will. As our dear Blessed Mother and the Apostles awaited the Holy Spirit in the original Novena in the Cenacle after our Lord’s Ascension, let us constantly echo the ancient Pentecost Prayer of the Church: “*Come, Holy Spirit!*”

As I conclude this Pastoral Letter on the Holy Spirit, I would like to share a beautiful prayer, known simply as “Catherine’s Prayer”, written by Mother Catherine McCauley, the Foundress of

the Sisters of Mercy. This prayer captures simply, and powerfully, the themes of this Pastoral letter.

***Catherine's Prayer***

*Come, O life-giving Spirit, transform us.  
Stir up in us the flame of love which is the gift.  
Give us wisdom to see as you see.  
Give us understanding to hear as you hear.  
Give us courage and strength to walk the way of justice and integrity.  
Kindle wonder and awe in us that we may have grateful spirits.  
You who dwell within us, fill us with love and devotion.  
Holy Wisdom, guide us in the choices we must make.  
Give us discerning hearts that we may choose what is good in accord with your desire.  
Loving God of mercy, finish in us the work you have begun.*

May the Grace and Gifts of the Holy Spirit envelop our Beloved Diocese, and each one of us; may He set our **hearts** on fire with His Love; may He **inspire** us to renew our Baptismal Promises, to make us the faithful witnesses we pledged to be at Confirmation and to truly center our lives on the Eucharist as disciples of Jesus who fully accept our **mission** to love God and our neighbor. Through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, *let our hearts be 'in-spired' for Mission*. That is how we will continue the Holy Spirit's work of transforming the world, and thereby "*renew the Face of the Earth*".

Faithfully yours in Christ,

*+ Paul J. Bradley*

Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley  
Bishop of Kalamazoo

Issued on August 28, 2021, the Feast of St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church.

## APPENDIX

### I. JUBILEE YEAR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit!

Fill our hearts with gratitude and love for the precious Gift of the most Holy Eucharist You have given us to be our spiritual Food and Drink for our Journey of Faith.

Enkindle within us the "Fire of Your Love" and inspire within us the desire to be like Jesus, Who won our Salvation and Who redeemed us from sin and death.

Help us, O Spirit of Mercy, to be poured out in charity, so that we can love as Jesus loves, in all that we think, say and do.

May You, O Spirit of Truth, give us the courage to be joyful witnesses to Jesus in our lives, and to always speak the Truth in Love.

Make our lives and homes places where Saints are formed, and where holy Vocations to the Priesthood, Consecrated Life, and Sacramental Marriage are fostered.

Help us, O Spirit of Compassion, to see all those who suffer and are in need as You see them--- as sisters and brothers in Christ.

May St. Augustine, our diocesan Patron, lead our restless hearts to find rest in You, and may Mary, the Mother of the Church, intercede for us, and lead us always to the Heart of her Divine Son.

Come, Holy Spirit, come into our lives, our parish, and our Diocese, and lead us always to live our lives according to Your holy Will, now and forever. Amen.

## II. GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**WISDOM** – the ability to get the “whole picture.” This gift helps us see the world through God’s eyes. It helps us to remember that people are more important than things. We become aware through the gift of wisdom of God’s grace and presence. (Wis 7:14; Sir 1:23; 14:20-27; Prov 2:1-6)

**UNDERSTANDING** – the ability to see from the “heart,” to put the feelings of others before our own. Understanding involves loving others just as they are and caring for the people no one else notices. (Wis 3:9; Prov 24:3)

**KNOWLEDGE** – the gift of objectivity, of seeing the world and things around us as they really are, rather than as we would like them to be. Knowledge helps us to discover new and creative ways to meet needs. (Prov 19:27; 24:3-5)

**FORTITUDE (COURAGE)** – the ability to follow our convictions and conscience no matter what the cost. Courage gives us the strength to do what is right in spite of obstacles and difficulties.

This gift frees us to live firmly by faith instead of by fear. It helps Christians choose consistently the right way to live in spite of disappointments and difficulties. (Ps 118:6, 13-14; Phil 1:12-14)

**COUNSEL** – the gift of right judgment, the ability to make good decisions after looking at the alternatives and considering the consequences. The gift of counsel reaches us through the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of reconciliation. At other times, the gift of counsel reaches us through other Christians who are ready to listen to our problems and help us. (Sir 19:18; 32:16-19; 37:7-15; Prov 15:22)

**PIETY (REVERENCE)** – to reverence and praise God in our worship and prayer life. It also helps us see God’s holiness reflected in other people and in nature. (Ps 118:23-24, 29; Sir 42:15-25, 43)

**WONDER AND AWE IN GOD’S PRESENCE (FEAR OF THE LORD)** – to be awake to the realization that we are always in God’s presence. The gift of wonder and awe tells us that God created the beauty of the universe but also listens to us, cares for us and loves us beyond all measure. (Isa 29:23; Sir 32:13; 43:28-35)

### FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The fruits of the Holy Spirit show the effects of His gifts to us. Just as a tree produces fruit when properly nourished, people who utilize the Holy Spirit's gifts show concrete evidence of his presence.

**LOVE** – quick to sense the needs of the people and then responding as Jesus would

**KINDNESS** – the strength of Christ's love which leads us to a greater service of one another

**JOY** – the ability to celebrate life even in the midst of pain and confusion

**PEACE** – quiet, inner confidence in God's care of my life

**PATIENCE** – perseverance to handle frustration and conflict without becoming unduly edgy or annoyed

**GOODNESS** – a real desire to live a holy life, to set a good example by my conduct wherever I am

**GENEROSITY** - being able to know that all I have comes from God and should be shared with all according to their need.

**GENTLENESS** - the ability to care for others even when they have wronged you, seeing all souls as those created by God.

**FAITHFULNESS** – the ability to stay firm in my commitment to God and to God's people

**MODESTY** – loving God, my neighbor and myself in my physical appearance and demeanor

**SELF-CONTROL** – learning to discipline my time, energy and desires to reflect my spiritual values and priorities

**CHASTITY** – able to form loving and caring friendships, which help us to act appropriately with our gift of sexuality