



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO
Office of the Bishop

January 21, 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today I write to all the faithful people in the Diocese, and in particular to the Catholic community of Battle Creek, regarding the temporary assistance that Archbishop Emeritus John Nienstedt has been offering at St. Philip Parish, while living in residence in a house on the property of St. Joseph Parish.

Archbishop Nienstedt's presence has unintentionally brought about a sense of disunity, fear, and hurt to many of you during this brief period of time. As your spiritual father and shepherd, I regret that more than words can express. While I made every effort to ensure that there were no canonical restrictions regarding the exercise of Archbishop Nienstedt's priestly ministry at St. Philip Parish, I should have foreseen the full impact and strong emotional reaction to his presence in the Diocese.

Even though we followed all the proper protocols (including appropriate background checks), it quickly became clear to me as the issue evolved that I had not anticipated well enough the emotional factors. I appreciate those who communicated with me about your concerns and your fears; I also am grateful to those who offered constructive criticism and feedback about this matter. I listened to each one, and I have tried to respond to many of them directly. All of your concerns made it abundantly clear to me that this situation had to be resolved immediately.

The Diocese of Kalamazoo rightfully takes great pride in the high standards and zero tolerance followed by me and established and built by my predecessors. I am very grateful to all those priests, deacons, religious sisters, and members of the laity who have worked so hard to maintain these high standards which has resulted in a very safe environment for our children and vulnerable populations, as well as the security of all our faithful people. As your Bishop that is my sacred responsibility, and I deeply regret even a momentary questioning of that safety and



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security. I assure you that priority remains sacred to me, and I will do my very best to maintain that standard absolutely.

As you may know, Archbishop Nienstedt has chosen to withdraw from the Diocese effective immediately for the good of the Church which we all love. I ask God's grace and guidance as we begin the healing process that is so important for all of us. In charity, I hope you will join me in praying for Archbishop Nienstedt.

For the hurt this situation has caused and the fears that have been raised, I am truly sorry and I ask for your forgiveness. It would never be my intention to bring harm to our beloved local Church. While I am personally convinced that at no time was anyone in any danger, I acknowledge the concerns expressed. I pray that with this matter now resolved, we will all be able to move forward. I want to regain your trust where that has been damaged or lost, and continue to strengthen our local Church here in the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

Knowing your goodness as I do, I earnestly ask that we move forward in hope together with a spirit of openness to mutually advance the mission of the Church here in this part of the Kingdom of God. Let us pray that we will receive the assistance of the Father's grace and guidance, Jesus' merciful love, and the Holy Spirit's abiding Presence, along with the intercession of our Blessed Mother.

Assuring you of my constant prayers for each of you, and humbly asking for your prayers for me, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul J. Bradley".

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo