



RENEW FAITH • BUILD COMMUNION • INSPIRE HOPE

September 2020

“Despite all our fears, challenges, and making adjustments to our new reality, I am hopeful that when this historic pandemic is over, we will emerge from this time truly renewed in Christ: stronger in our faith with a new perspective; more aware of who we are as members of the Body of Christ; more deeply yearning for the Gift of the Eucharist; and more determined to move forward in our faith, while embracing the mission of the Eucharist to serve God and our neighbor.”
~From “Darkness to Light: Hope for a new Pentecost”

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This is an extraordinary time in the life of our beloved Diocese. Since early March of this year, we have all made many sacrifices to protect the health and safety of our families, our friends and neighbors, and our fellow citizens, as we confront the challenges of the pandemic. While recovery and a timeline for a return to normalcy are uncertain, we continue to thank God for His many blessings as we live the mission of the Eucharist. Our sacred mission calls us to love one another through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and to be missionary disciples, joyfully sharing the Good News in good times, in bad times and in these times.

Given our unprecedented circumstances, this year I have authorized a significant change in the allocation of funds contributed to this year’s *Bishop’s Annual Appeal*. After the Parish has hit 50 percent of its Parish goal, **all gifts contributed beyond that will be returned to the Parish**. This direction, which accounts for a 50 percent reduction in the diocesan operational budget for this fiscal year, is a sacrifice I feel necessary to assist Parishes in securing financial stability. As I have said many times, *Strong Parishes equal a Strong Diocese*. I want to help all Parishes in our Diocese remain vital centers of worship, faith formation and service to their local communities.

*Our theme for this year’s annual appeal, “Living the Mission of the Eucharist”, is powerfully expressed in our three diocesan priorities: 1) Fostering Priestly Vocations by supporting seminarian education/formation as well as providing for ongoing priestly formation opportunities; 2) Accompanying Families toward Holiness by supporting our Catholic schools and providing online faith formation materials; and 3) Activating Missionary Disciples by helping to spread the Good News by supporting the cost of websites and providing our award-winning *Southwest Michigan Catholic* magazine to all registered Parishioners free of charge.*

My dear Family of Faith, these important initiatives are just a few examples of how your generous gift to the *Bishop’s Annual Appeal* enables us to live the mission of the Eucharist. Your participation in the *Bishop’s Annual Appeal* affirms our calling to be generous stewards of the Church’s mission and enables the good work of the Church to continue in our Diocese. Thank you in advance for your response to our Lord’s call to respond to Him with grateful hearts.

Assuring you of my prayers for you and your families, and asking for your prayers for me and our Diocese, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo

