

A Pastoral Reflection
Teach My People to Pray



Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL
Bishop of Green Bay

A Pastoral Reflection

Teach My People to Pray

Phase 1: Formation in Prayer & Holiness (2014-16)
for Disciples on the Way

Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL
Bishop of Green Bay



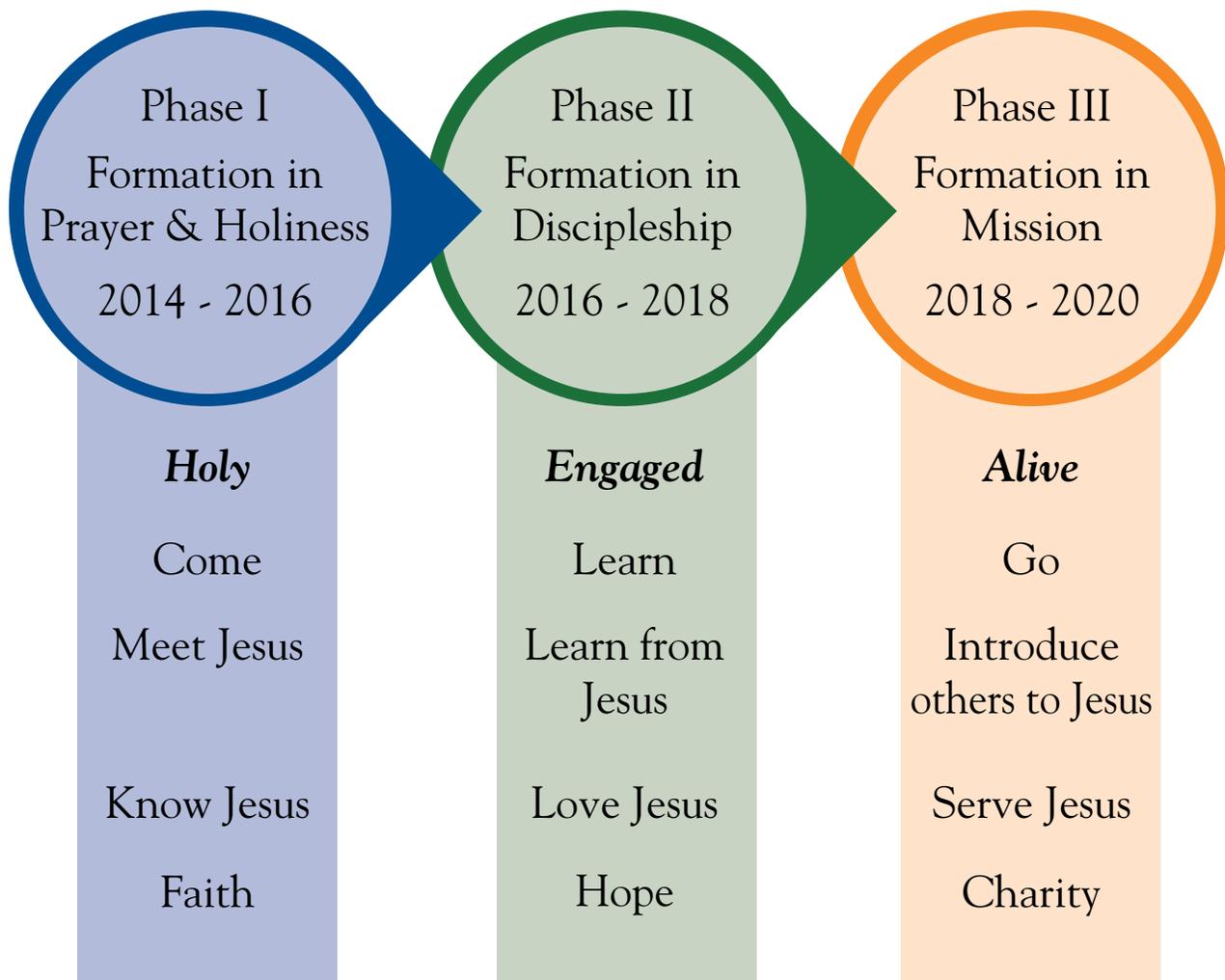
August 2014

Effective on the Feast of Christ the King, 2014
through the First Sunday of Advent, 2016

Mission Map

Disciples on the Way

A Missionary Journey into the New Evangelization



Introduction

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is hard to believe that we are already in the fourth year of planning and implementing my pastoral letter, *“Parishes: Called to be Holy, Fully Engaged, Fully Alive.”* During these past three years, the pastoral ministry of new evangelization has been identified as a top priority in a majority of our parishes. Additionally, we have seen the call to new evangelization emerge as a common theme to all that Pope Francis is about as he reaches out to the poor, neglected and marginal within the Church and world. He reminds us that we are called to be a Missionary Church!

It is with this in mind that I extended my invitation to all in the Diocese of Green Bay to participate in a journey of six years called *“Disciples on the Way”* (released April 2014). Over the next six years, with an emphasis on prayer, discipleship and mission, our call to be *“Disciples on the Way”* will deepen our call to be *parishes that are holy, engaged and alive!*

As you continue your parish pastoral planning for this fourth year of responding to my pastoral letter, I share with you a pastoral reflection on prayer for your consideration and implementation into your parish planning. Responding to the deep desire of our parishes to embrace and embody the New Evangelization, we must begin as *“Disciples on the Way”* with a two-year emphasis on prayer. During these first two years, we will strive to answer the Lord’s call to *“teach my people to pray.”*





Shortly after I arrived to the Diocese of Green Bay in August 2008, I kept hearing the words “teach my people to pray” as I myself spent time in prayer.

Evidently, the Lord and the Blessed Mother want to pour out even more abundant graces on all of us so that we may learn to pray and to pray more deeply, thereby growing in holiness together!

The challenge of finding ways to implement and to live out the new evangelization as called for by the last four popes, and now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, presents us with a great opportunity to deepen our own prayer life as individuals, as parishes and as a Diocese so that we are well disposed and ready to “make disciples” in the next phase of this journey, which is called “Formation in Discipleship” (2016-2018).

I would like to focus on a topic that is dear to all our hearts: it is the theme of prayer, and especially Christian prayer, the prayer which Jesus taught and which the Church continues to teach us. It is in Jesus that one becomes able to approach God in the depth and intimacy of the relationship of a child to his or her father. Together with the first disciples, let us now turn with humble trust to the Teacher as we ask “Lord teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). Pope Benedict XVI has written about this so well in his book, “*A School of Prayer: The Saints Show Us How to Pray*,”¹ and I would like to share with you a favorite quote:

“Let us learn to live our relationship with the Lord even more intensely as it were at a ‘school of prayer.’ We know well in fact that prayer should not be taken for granted. It is necessary to learn now to pray as it were, acquiring this art ever anew; even those who are very advanced in the spiritual life always feel the need to learn from Jesus to learn how to pray authentically.”²

It is my hope that in the next two years we can build a renewed love for Jesus, cultivate our friendship with Him and rekindle, or experience for the first time, the fires of Divine Love placed in all of us at baptism. Bishop Aloysius Wycislo, in his book “*Those Who Knew Jesus*,” realized that “*Jesus called people to follow him right from where he found them, in their concrete life situations. Matthew, a publican and tax collector, the others, fishermen, farmers, with the exception of Judas, all were Galileans, a few came of wealth but most were poor. Jesus delivered his invitation to each one where they were, went from one to the other and called them.*”³ Jesus is calling each one of us, right where we are, to come and follow Him. May we reconnect more personally in a daily way with the person of Jesus and His Holy Church!

An Important Word of Gratitude

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all in pastoral ministry who are men and women of prayer and who teach others to pray: priests, deacons, pastoral leaders, diocesan and parish staff members and those who teach in Catholic schools and religious education programs. I am so grateful to those institutions of Catholic mission in the Diocese: religious communities of men and women – both active and contemplative, Catholic hospitals, Catholic colleges and campus ministry programs in the secular colleges of the Diocese of Green Bay. To those involved in the many prayer groups in the parishes and in the Diocese, as well as retreat movement leaders and retreat ministry groups, your work is fruitful, important and necessary.

To all of our families, whether they are single-person households or large-family households, I express the gratitude of the Church for your love of Jesus Christ and for teaching your families to pray together. For all the efforts undertaken to share the love of Christ and the Good News, especially to those who hunger and thirst for holiness in their lives, I thank you all from my heart!



The Call to Holiness

It strikes me as very important that we begin this journey to implement the New Evangelization by deeply rooting our efforts and immersing ourselves in prayer. We need to accept this invitation articulated by the Second Vatican Council, by a generous response to the call to prayer and holiness. The Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* declared that “All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity.”⁴ All are called to a life of holiness. Each and every one of us is called to be a person of prayer and action, to strive to live in a deep intimacy with God, and from this deep source of intimacy to respond to the message of the Gospel – by loving our neighbor and by spreading the Good News of God’s mercy and love. As the Gospel of Matthew says: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

In my pastoral letter of 2011, “*Parishes: Called to be Holy, Fully Engaged, Fully Alive*,” I explained that since the world “has become very secularized and is losing sight of God, it is incredibly important for all of us who are members of the Church to help to satisfy the great hunger for holiness and for meaning in life through spirituality ... We need to make space for Christ in our minds and in our hearts which are often too cluttered. We need to make space for the gift which is Jesus Christ himself for ‘*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever*’ (Hebrews 13:8).” Making Christ a priority in our lives means that we have to say “yes” to what Christ is asking of us and say “no” to the things of the world that pull us away from Him. Each one of us is called to conversion, turning away from habits and practices in our lives that pull us further from God’s love and toward a closer relationship with Christ. This conversion involves a *metanoia* – a profound and ongoing conversion of heart and mind to Christ, centered in prayer. As Bishop Robert Banks reminds us, “A real, intimate relationship with Jesus is the very core of our spiritual lives. A personal relationship with Jesus is not the result of our work, but His gift to us. And that is why we rejoice and do not lose heart.”

The Cry of the Poor

The most powerful prayers are the cries of the poor, the voiceless, the rejected, the marginalized, the newly arrived immigrants and other displaced persons. The Lord has a special love for those who are in dire or woeful situations. He Himself was born in the poverty of a manger as there was no room for the Holy Family at the inn. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

The poor, the lost, the least and the last in our society are especially close to the Lord. Over and over, Jesus tells us so and asks the Church to respond to the plight of those in need. In the Diocese, there is great generosity in this area and we should continue to be generous, as the Lord has been greatly generous with us. We ought to be especially responsive to those who are suffering in all of its forms through illness, advanced age, homelessness, unemployment and those suffering from the ravages of addiction. We need to make sure that the “inn” of our own heart and prayer life is especially attuned to their needs. Pope Francis continually reminds all of us who are so blessed to reach out to those who have less than we do. “In the poor and outcast,” Pope Francis says, “we see Christ’s face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ.”⁵

I would like to add a word of encouragement to the religious sisters and the sponsors and leaders of our Catholic hospitals and care facilities. You are to be commended on your tireless and dedicated work for the poor in which you are engaged. Thank you for striving to hold true to your Catholic identity through the gifts of your pastoral care and ministry. Your assistance in helping people to pray and stay close to the Lord in very difficult times is to be truly commended.



In the poor
and outcast,
we see Christ’s
face; by loving
and helping
the poor, we
love and serve
Christ.

Pope Francis



What Is Prayer?

What is prayer and what does it mean to be a disciple who is a prayerful person?

It is clear that it is not just the recitation of prayers at Sunday Mass that signifies a person who has a quality prayer life, although this is certainly an important part of a disciple's prayer life. Rather, a disciple of Jesus is someone who is a good friend of Jesus and spends some time alone with the Lord in prayer every day. As Bishop Robert Morneau so eloquently remarks, "*Prayer is that plunge into the mind and heart of God, attentive to his word and willing to do his will.*"⁶ Each of us is called to walk with Jesus, and strive to grow closer to Him in thought, word and deed.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* indicates:

"... the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice Holy God and in communion with Him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. Prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ's love" (CCC, 2565).

The Christian life is a life rooted in prayer, the fruit of which is love. During these first two years, as we learn to pray and to deepen our prayer lives, I urge you to "come to Jesus" in prayer. This phrase is often taken out of context but when you reflect upon it, it is an invitation and a prayer in and of itself – it is an invitation to come to Jesus and to not be afraid to come to Him. *Come* and be a friend of Jesus. *Come* and learn to sit at his feet, to adore Him, to love Him, and to spend time with Him every day. *Come* and live out of that great fountain of God's mercy that He is pouring upon the world by truly enjoying all of the spiritual riches that He has to give you through the life of the Church and through the gift of the Holy Eucharist every Sunday. *Come* throughout the week and make God your top priority in your daily life. *Come* and do not be afraid!

The call of these first two years is to put first things first, which is all about establishing priorities centered around God; especially in our time, our talent and our treasure, our prayer, our service, and our sharing. I would like to invite all the faithful in the Diocese to take the next step in deepening our prayer lives.

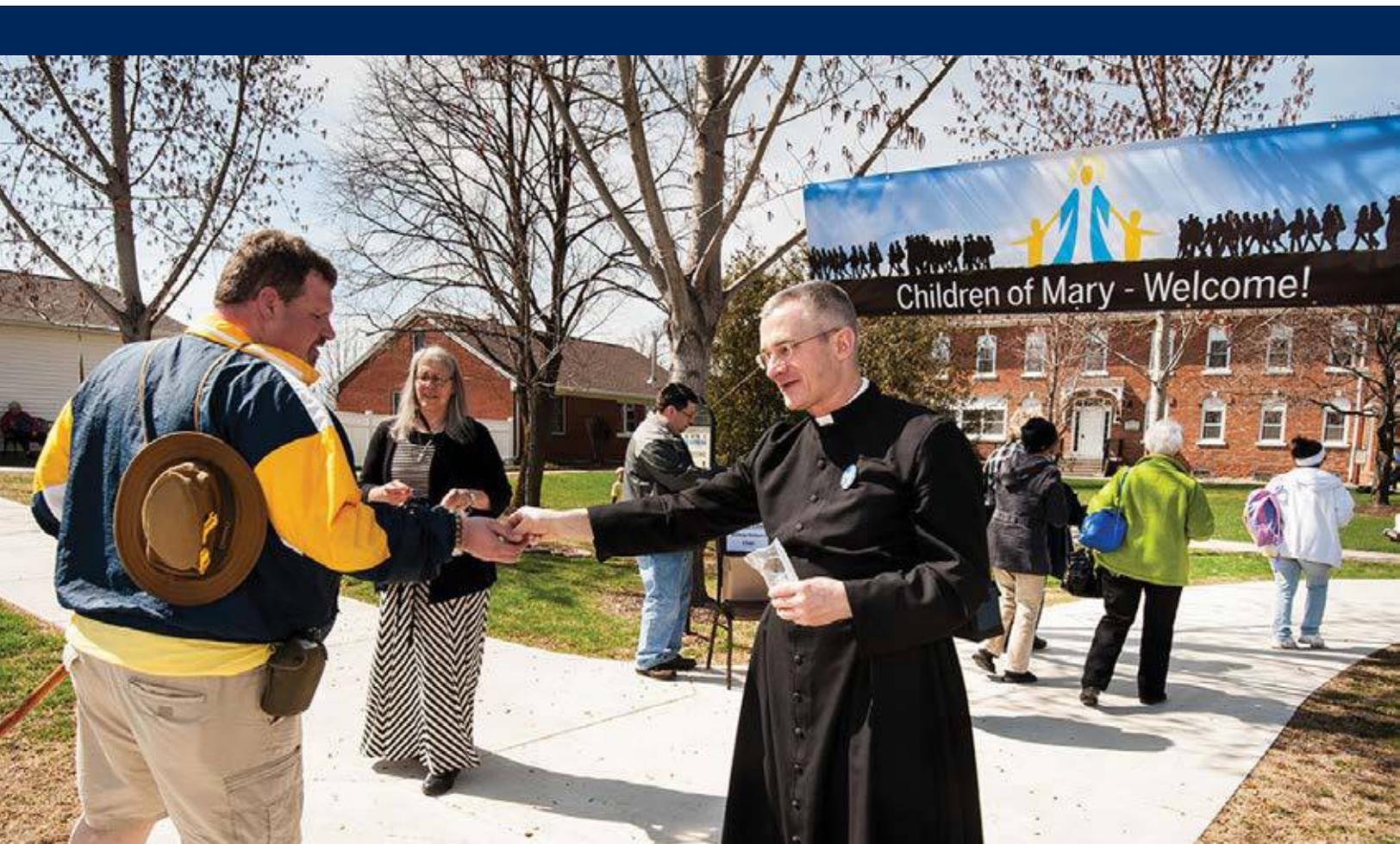
The Diocese of Green Bay: A Source of Spiritual Treasure

I have often said that the “treasures are in our own backyard” and it is true. As I travel throughout the Diocese and then travel to our mission parish in the Dominican Republic, I realize how blessed we are in the Diocese of Green Bay. There is treasure in this Diocese and we must reawaken our prayer lives to uncover this treasure to share with others. In this pastoral reflection, I would like to take some time to express my appreciation and gratitude to those in various ministries and positions of leadership throughout the Diocese, including our parishioners. I would like to share with you some thoughts and practical insights that I have prayed about especially for you.

Invitations to Leaders

The first audience for these two years of immersion in prayer ought to be all of us in leadership. We are called to be men and women of prayer and to take care of our own primary relationship with God as the very source of our own ministries and activities. We must deepen our own walk with Jesus Christ so that we transparently reflect Christ all the more. The old maxim is true “you cannot give what you do not have yourself”; therefore, we cannot be Christ to the world if we have not let Him enter our own lives and take hold of us. As Cardinal Timothy Dolan reminds us, *“We cannot engage culture unless we let Him first engage us; we cannot dialogue with others unless we first dialogue with Him; we cannot challenge unless we first let Him challenge us.”*⁷

As we strive to lead others in prayer, the call to prayer and holiness ought to be first lived out by the bishop, priests, Diocesan Curia, deacons, pastoral leaders and pastoral ministers.





My Promise to You as Bishop

As bishop, I will continue to strive more intentionally to achieve holiness in prayer and virtue in my own life and ministry as an example and witness. For me, this means being evermore consistent in my prayer life, with an intentional fidelity to the commitments that are a part of my life as a priest and bishop: daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, prayerful celebration of the Holy Mass, a holy hour on a daily basis as often as possible, daily recitation of the rosary and *lectio divina* (prayerful reading of the Bible), regular confession and spiritual direction, as well as fasting regularly. These items need greater attention in my life. When I am very consistent about doing them, they truly enhance my love relationship with Jesus and the Church.

I especially remember the words from my first pastoral reflection written in 2009 called “*A New Moment for Catechesis in the Diocese of Green Bay*” where I said, “I have noticed in my nearly 30 years of pastoral ministry that when I am careful about teaching and preaching faithfully, clearly and with joy – great fruit flows into ministry – a success that does not flow when I may be nebulous or unclear or compromising on the great legacy we have been given to pass on. What keeps us all joyful and faithful is to be rooted in prayer.”

Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Leaders, Pastoral Ministers

Priests

My brother priests, I know that all of you are working very hard in your pastoral ministry, sometimes covering several parishes sacramentally and administratively. As your shepherd, I humbly ask you to please remember to take care of your own soul. It often happens that those closest to a profession also neglect their own care, e.g. health care professionals often neglect their own health; psychologists forget to take care of their own psychological well-being; teachers resist taking on-going education classes, etc. Sometimes, the reality is that priests neglect the care of their own souls, putting the needs of others far ahead of their own.

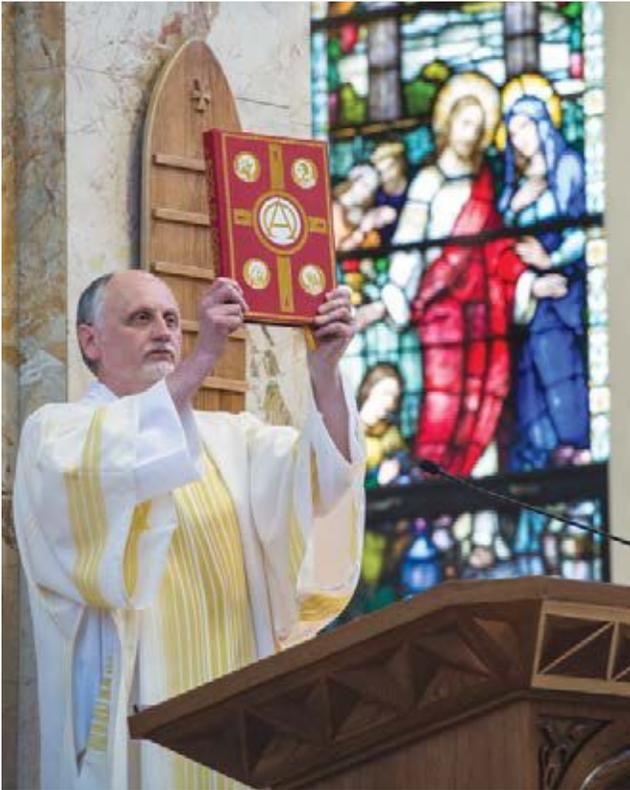
As our retreat master in June 2014, Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto, explained, the priest is fundamentally a servant and has the responsibility to tend to three types of service. The first is the “service of reconciliation.” A good confessor is first of all a good penitent who goes to confession frequently. He is also a *pontifex* – a bridge builder of reconciliation between and among the faithful in their families and in their parish communities.

The second service the priest renders is the “service of the Word of God.” He recites all of the offices of The Liturgy of the Hours every day for his own people, for the Diocese and for the Church universal. He is also a man of the Word of God, both a herald and a doer of the Word of God. He practices praying with the Bible (called *lectio divina*) on a frequent basis and strives to live and breathe the Word as he ministers to the People of God.

Third, he is a “servant of the Eucharist.” He celebrates the Mass well and prayerfully. He also spends time in private prayer before the Eucharist, talking and listening to his best friend, Jesus Christ.

My dear brother priests, I ask you in this two-year period to reinvigorate your interior life and to make sure that you are tending the garden of your own soul by putting first things first, just as I will strive to do. Together, as a community of priests, we can support and nourish one another to truly be bridge builders of God’s mercy, love and renewal to the world. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, as we renew our interior lives together, so too we will renew the lives of our parishes and parishioners.

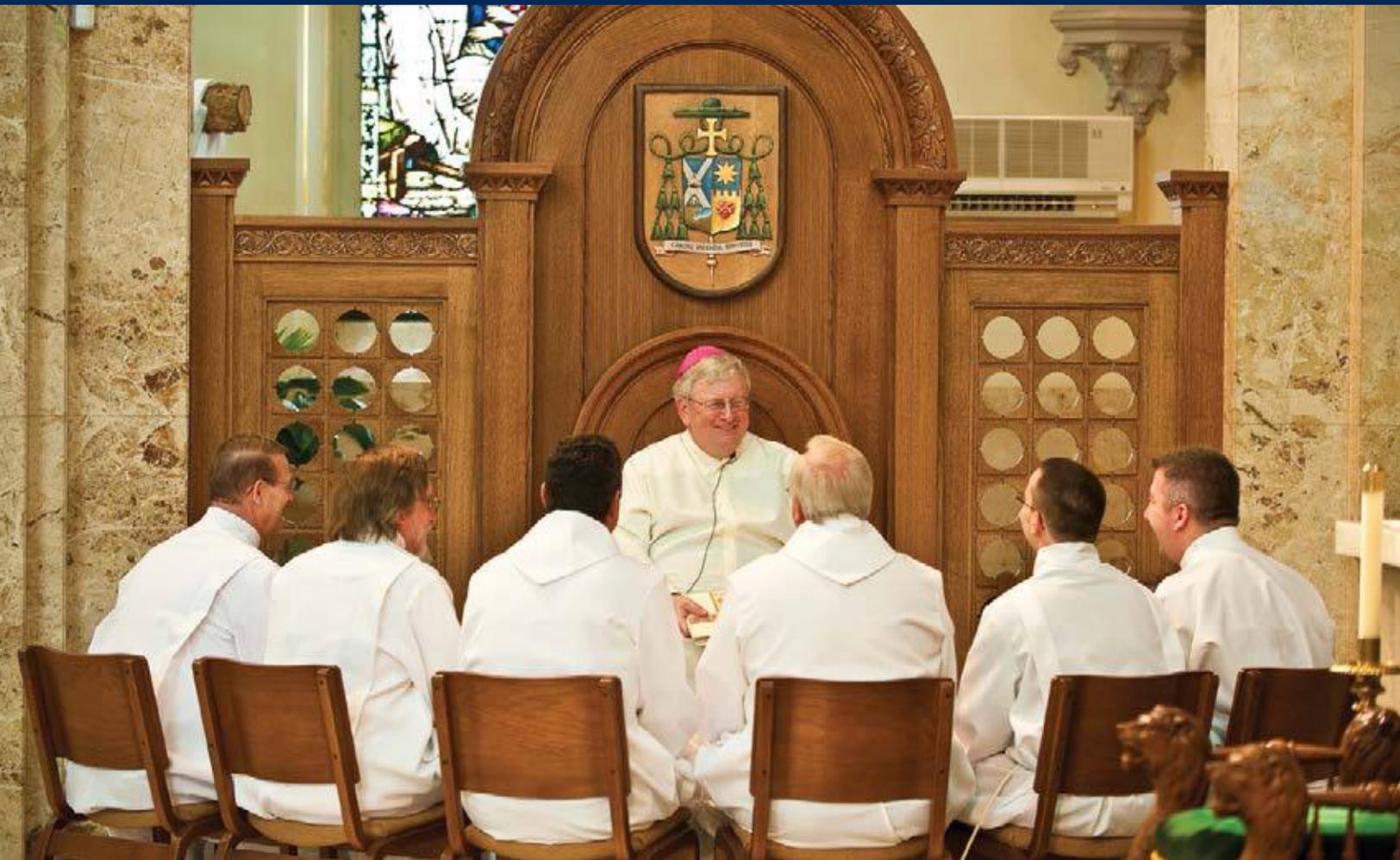




Deacons

Deacons live with one foot in the world and the other foot in the Church. You are the sacramental reminder to all of us that while we are “in the world” we are not to be “of the world.” All of us are called to grow in holiness and to be a sign to the world of that friendship with Jesus. I think, in a way, you are a very special sign and symbol to our people of the pursuit of holiness. In your vocation, you, in essence, have one foot each in two worlds: the spiritual world of the Church and the world of daily life. I am sure that you find that bringing the sacred and the daily life together is not always easy. You brothers can provide a real example of the call to holiness to our people. So I ask you to assist your pastor to improve the quality of the prayer life of the parish and to really assist the pastor in moving the parish more toward a school of prayer. I encourage you to help in creating an environment where prayer is taught, learned and appreciated more and more with the passing of years.

Your call to holiness as lived out in the ministries of Word, sacrament and service is critical to the life of our parishes and Diocese. Much of what I have said above to priests also applies to you in your vocation.

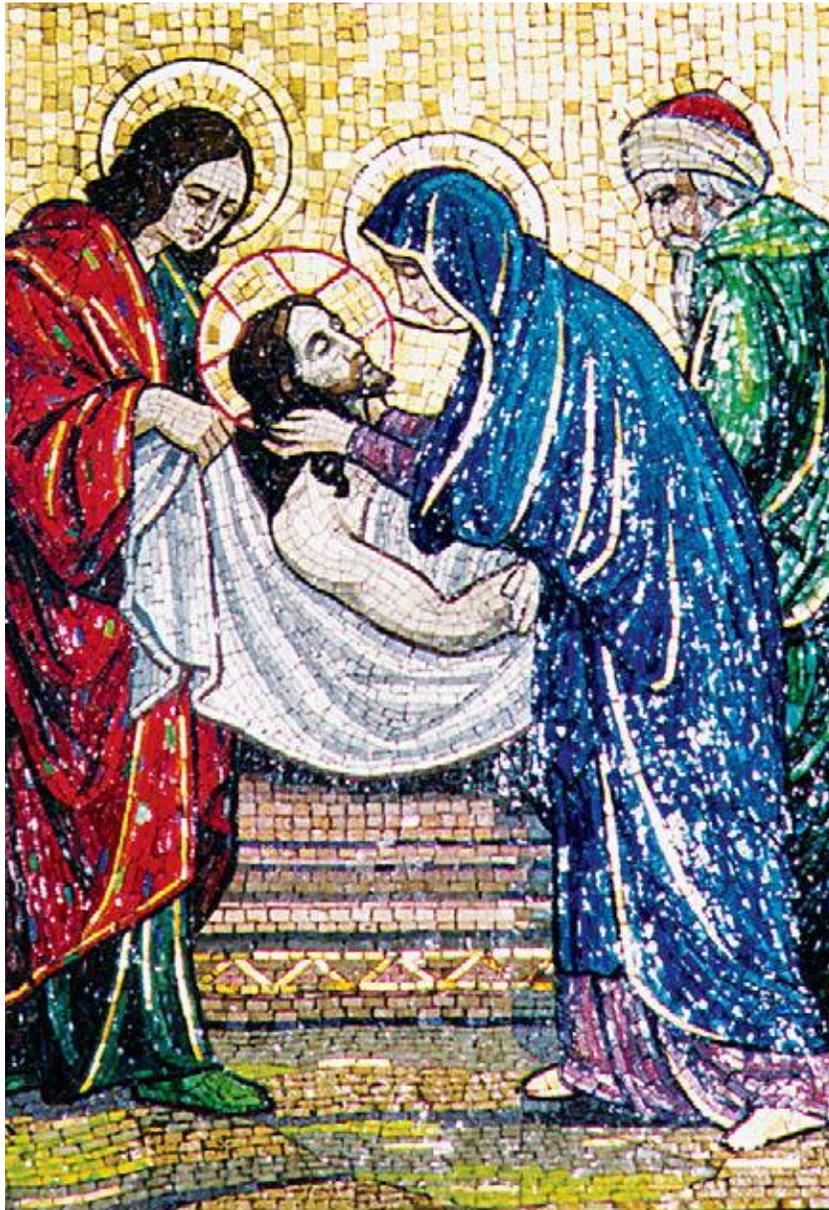


Pastoral Leaders

Many of the same things that I have written about priests and deacons can also be said of pastoral leaders and pastoral ministers. While you do not make promises in the same way as priests or deacons, you have an incredibly important responsibility providing pastoral leadership in our parishes. From your own vocational perspective, you also need to be in as good a spiritual condition as possible. Many of you are married and need to ensure that the domestic Church of your family is well cared for and tended to by you. Remember, God first, then family and then work – in that order. Thank you for your witness of faith, your willingness to serve in a difficult role, and your reliance on the Lord as the source of your strength and prayer.

Pastoral Ministers

Pastoral staff and other pastoral workers and ministers need to have a dynamic prayer life in order to engage in ministries on behalf of the Church. Frequent confession and spiritual direction are very important as you are on the front fields of the battle lines and bear a lot of the suffering and trauma of our parishes, families and communities.



Pope Francis mentions the many tasks that you undertake in your ministries:

“They help so many people to be healed or to die in peace ... they are present to those enslaved by different addictions ... they devote themselves to the education of children and young people ... they take care of the elderly who have been forgotten by everyone else.”⁸

I am grateful for your ministry of presence and care to all of God’s children, especially to the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Prayer support from others is very important as you carry out these acts of love in Christ’s name and your need to be in good spiritual condition is imperative.

The Diocesan Curia

The Diocesan Curia has such an important role in assisting the bishop, the parishes and other Catholic institutions within the Diocese. Pope Benedict XVI insightfully reminds us all that *“In our time we are taken up with so many activities and duties, worries, and problems: we often tend to fill all of the spaces of the day, without leaving a moment to pause and reflect and to nourish our spiritual life, our contact with God.”*⁹

Staying close to the daily source of nourishment in the Eucharist is very important for you as a member of the Curia. Being a disciple who listens to the voice of the Shepherd is a quintessential quality in your role, for you serve Jesus Christ by assisting the chief shepherd of the Diocese, the bishop, and the priorities of the Diocese. Regular nourishment and participation in the Eucharist is very important, as you are a representative of the bishop and the Diocese in a very particular way.

Beginning this Advent, we will begin providing daily Mass a little earlier Monday through Friday on campus. Mass will begin at 11:30 a.m. so that you can have daily Eucharistic support for your ministry which relies heavily on your living relationship with the Eucharistic Lord. I would ask each one of you to attend Mass often during the week in addition to Sunday. If you have families or friends that would also like to attend, they are most welcome.

I have already arranged that my daily Mass calendar include one Mass a week with you. Our generous priests on the staff and others will help in the provision of daily Mass for the Curia. I will also be providing opportunities for confessions more often as well as Eucharistic holy hours on campus as a way for you to draw closer to the Lord. This is a gift to you of time with the Lord, a gift that will pay rich harvests in your ministries. *“Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the Word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out,”* Pope Francis cautions us.¹⁰ Please, take good care of your primary responsibility for your own soul and your family as well.





Strive to impart to our students a great love for prayer and an interest in knowing Jesus and in loving and serving Him.

Catholic Schools and Religious Education Classes as Schools of Prayer

To Catholic school and religious education teachers and catechists, I would ask you to find ways to become “schools of prayer” in your schools and parishes, but also in your home lives. A culture of prayer can be created in which you strive to impart to our students a great love for prayer and an interest in knowing Jesus and in loving and serving Him. Often it is your witness in prayer that will uplift and inspire others, especially children. We should never forget the words of Pope Paul VI who said that “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”¹¹ In our own Diocese, we have the witness of one who saw and

learned from the Blessed Mother. More than 150 years ago, the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brise in Champion, Wis., and told her to pray for the conversion of sinners, to teach the children to pray and to provide basic instruction in the faith.

Sr. Adele was accompanied by the Blessed Mother in her missionary efforts going out into the rough woods of Northern Wisconsin to spread the Good News, teaching the children to pray and even starting a school of prayer and instruction.

The Blessed Mother told Sr. Adele “go and fear nothing, I will help you.” This was and still is a striking mission given to this Diocese so many years ago and a great consolation that the Blessed Mother will be with us in our efforts.

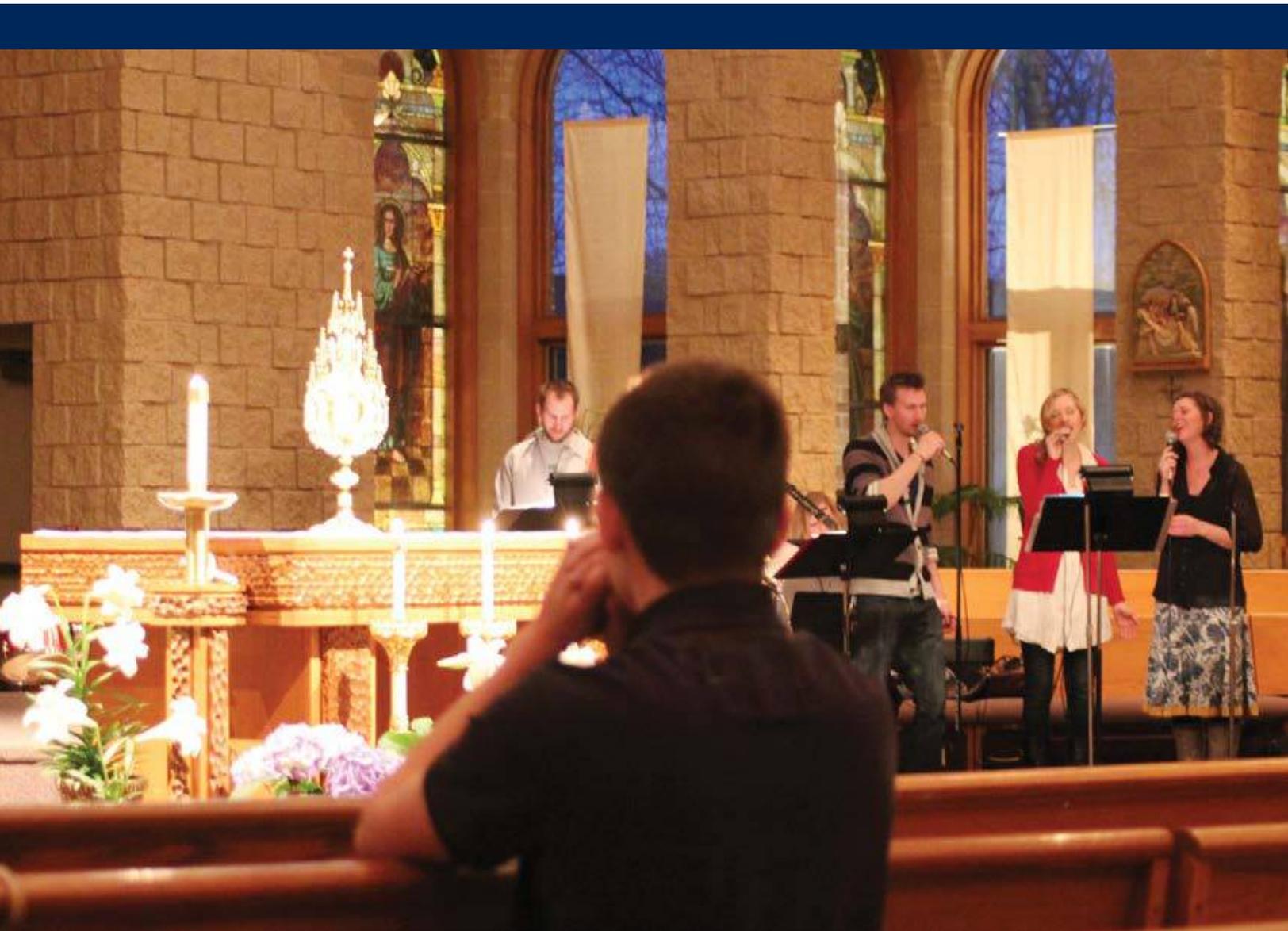
Certainly our Catholic schools and religious education classes ought to be real schools of prayer where children learn to pray, cultivate the habits of Christian life and where they are instructed clearly and faithfully in the teaching of the Church. Here they should be regularly reminded to attend Sunday Mass and should see you – their teachers and catechists – in the midst of the community at Mass. We all ought to make sure their parents are actively involved in the Sunday Mass and in the parish community. We are all catechists in a sense, for the word catechist comes from the Greek word to echo and what we are echoing is the person of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church. *“At the heart of catechesis, we find in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus Christ. The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people in intimacy with Jesus Christ. Only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Trinity.”*¹²

Young Adult and Adult Formation as a School of Prayer

When it comes to our being called to be a school of prayer, school is never over. There is no graduation from prayer. Rather, as young adults and adults we are called for a lifetime to deepen our relationship with Jesus in and through prayer. Young adults are looking for a personal relationship with Jesus. They want to encounter Jesus Christ not just as a good idea or theological concept, but as real flesh and blood. Young adults have a lot to offer other generations of what it means to encounter Jesus in our culture and Church. They are hungry to learn the traditions of Catholic prayer with a new vigor and enthusiasm. Our youth ministry and young adult outreach will be alive and vibrant if it is centered in a variety of meaningful prayer experiences that lead young adults to the person of Jesus.

Additionally, young adults have discovered a network of prayer that is available within social media. Prayer websites, YouTube videos, Twitter posts and other social media both draw us into the content and connect us to others with whom we become a community of prayer.

Likewise, there has been a hunger among adults to learn more about prayer in their personal lives and in the life of the Church. Many times adults are looking for what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus in and through prayer. I would challenge our parish adult formation programs to offer sessions on and experiences of prayer that will grow and deepen not only the prayer life of the adult faithful, but through prayer, an adult relationship with the Lord. As disciples, our school of prayer is open all year round for the rest of our lives, as we learn how to pray in every stage of life.





Catholic Colleges, Campus Ministries as Schools of Prayer

Catholic colleges and campus ministries in the Diocese have a wonderful opportunity to introduce Christ to young people who are searching for meaning and identity and help them discover a living and loving relationship with the Lord, which is such a gift. Christ has always been at the center of Catholic institutions of higher education. We should strive to ensure that all that we do and say is rooted in Christ and His teachings. The Catholic teachings should have a primacy of place in the instruction and in the life of the college.

To all of you involved in schools of higher learning, you have a great responsibility and honor. Please help our young people to know, love and serve Jesus Christ in our world today. Teach them how to pray and to grow in their lives of faith by getting them involved in Christian prayer and meditation from the great spiritual treasury of the Church. Please invite and assist them to grow in their love for the Sunday Liturgy. In this way, the activities of charity and justice will have a contextual relationship with Christ from which to engage the modern world with all of its many challenges and wonderful opportunities.

Christ has
always been
at the center
of Catholic
institutions
of higher
education.
We should
strive to
ensure that all
that we do and
say is rooted
in Christ and
His teachings.

Parishes as Schools of Prayer

As I mentioned in my pastoral letter of 2011, “*Parishes: Called to be Holy, Fully Engaged, Fully Alive,*” I called parishes to become “schools of prayer.” During these two years, I ask that each parish, wherever possible, have at least one holy hour each month, with exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to pray for the parish, the Diocese and families that we may have a massive awakening of the faith and that many people will return to the practice of the faith. I know that many of the parishes have several hours per week of adoration and a few parishes even have perpetual adoration at the parish. In addition to your current practices, I ask that you share at least one holy hour per month in which you would join all our parishes in prayer for the needs of the parish, for the Diocese, for the strengthening of marriage and family life, for the protection of life and for an increase of vocations.

Hopefully our deacons will be able to assist the pastors or parochial vicars with the holy hour, if the pastor cannot lead it himself. The Diocese will provide materials and training for the pastor and/or deacon in conducting holy hours which are reverent and inviting to parishioners. If there is no priest or deacon available in a given parish, the pastoral leader or a designated and trained extraordinary minister of Holy Communion could be prepared for this purpose.

In 2016 (date to be determined), parishes will also be asked to recite a consecration prayer on behalf of the parish family and to ask for any missing parishioners to return to Church and to the active and consistent practice of the faith. As a community of faith, we will do our very best to help all of our families to accept the call to pray every day, and to return to regular Sunday Mass attendance. If you go to Mass often, then enhance your participation and living out of the faith by attending Sunday Mass with better preparation and joy!





Jesus desires all of us to be in close communion with Him and through Him, to the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

An important audience in this first phase of “Disciples on the Way” is primarily those good people who are already in our pews on a frequent basis but may never have been taught to pray personally or to meditate or contemplate. The sojourners on this journey are those who are involved in Church to some extent but may never have considered themselves to be invited personally to live the life of a dynamic disciple as one who is a close friend of Jesus. But you are called to this. We all are! Jesus desires all of us to be in close communion with Him and through Him, to the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are also many among us who no longer know how to pray even the basic prayers of the Church or the rosary. I would especially ask priests, deacons, pastoral leaders and parish staffs to encourage parishioners often during this two-year period to deepen their own relationship with Jesus, to grow in intimate love of Him and to offer various methods of doing so from our great spiritual tradition. We must all help our friends and family members to grow in their own prayer lives gently and lovingly. This too is a way to witness and share in the joy of forming disciples. There are people in our parishes who would love to teach others to pray; let us encourage and support their efforts.

You will not be alone in this work! My staff and I will assist you in all these efforts. As my gift to you, I will be holding mini days of recollection in every region of the Diocese in the next two years and will be happy to share two prayer forms with you, lectio divina and Pray Without Ceasing. These are some simple ways that I have found helpful over the years to pray, meditate and contemplate. Others will be offering prayer seminars, training, formation opportunities and other prayer experiences as well.

Thank you for the ways you reach out during the special seasons with special devotional practices like the Stations of the Cross, days of retreat, soup and Scripture programs, etc. I appreciate all of the ways that you provide for the spiritual formation of your parishioners, especially those who provide a parish retreat or parish mission. These are all simple, effective and fruitful ways that our parishes can grow as schools of prayer.



To Those in Consecrated Life

To those of you in consecrated life – religious sisters, nuns, priests, brothers and monks – I know that the priests, the faithful and I are so deeply grateful for your presence and ministries in the Diocese. You have made such a huge contribution to this Diocese throughout your presence and ministry here. From the first Jesuit missionaries who brought the Gospel to this area to the Franciscan communities of women and men, from the Norbertine Fathers and canons to the missionary groups, such as the Salvatorians, to the Dominicans and others, the Diocese of Green Bay has been abundantly blessed because of your efforts. During this two-year period of focus on prayer and intercession, special mention is to be made of the contemplative cloistered sisters who give their entire lives for prayer and sacrifice for the sake of others – the Carmelite sisters in Denmark. They, as are all of our communities, including those who have been here for decades and those communities who are newly arrived, such as the monks at Resurrection Monastery and the newly founded community of the Missionaries of the Word, are called to prayer and intercession. We are so grateful for your presence and your joyful witness!

Speaking of joy, which is a grand theme of the pontificate of Pope Francis, the Holy Father has called for a year on the consecrated life. The pope says that “*religious need to be men and women capable of awakening the world.*” He also writes that “*wherever consecrated persons are, there must always be joy.*”¹³

We look forward to the focus of the Church universal on the consecrated life and as a Diocese we will pray for and rejoice in the wonderful presence of our religious. We will also pray that the Lord Jesus will bring our communities many new vocations to carry on the mission for which they have been founded. We look forward to the sharing of your charism and especially your prayer life more with the Diocese during these two years. Who knows what fruits these years of “*Disciples on the Way*” will hold for you? Just as Abraham and Sarah were surprised by some unexpected guests one day (Genesis 18:1-15), may the God of abundant blessings shower us grace and surprises through “*Disciples on the Way.*”

Every Catholic Household as a Home of Prayer and Love

Each family is a domestic church, which means that each home has a noble purpose, meaning and special place in the Body of Christ. The home is a church in miniature. My mother used to say that a house is just a house until the family invests love in it, then it becomes a home. I would ask you to seek ways that you can pray together as a family and grow to love the Lord and the Church as a family unit. Bishop Robert Banks reminds us that *“Holiness is not something that we look for after we have finished making a living and raising a family. Holiness is putting God at the center of the way we earn a living, raise a family, and live our lives.”*

Please make sure that you have religious articles like a crucifix and a statue of the Sacred Heart or of the Blessed Mother in your home so that your children feel comfortable with these sacred signs. I am told that many of our young children do not know how to make the sign of the cross nor do they even recognize what a crucifix is because they seldom or never attend Mass. Let us make part of our evangelization commitment as families of faith to teach our children to sign themselves with the sign of the cross, to memorize the essential prayers, to attend Sunday Mass as a family and to have fun doing it!

I encourage you to pray the rosary together as a family or to read the Scripture (Bible) readings for the coming Sunday so that you are very familiar with them when you attend the Sunday Mass. I ask you to transform your home into a school of prayer and love by making the family of Jesus, Joseph and Mary your model and example.



Holiness is not something that we look for after we have finished making a living and raising a family. Holiness is putting God at the center of the way we earn a living, raise a family, and live our lives.

Bishop Robert Banks



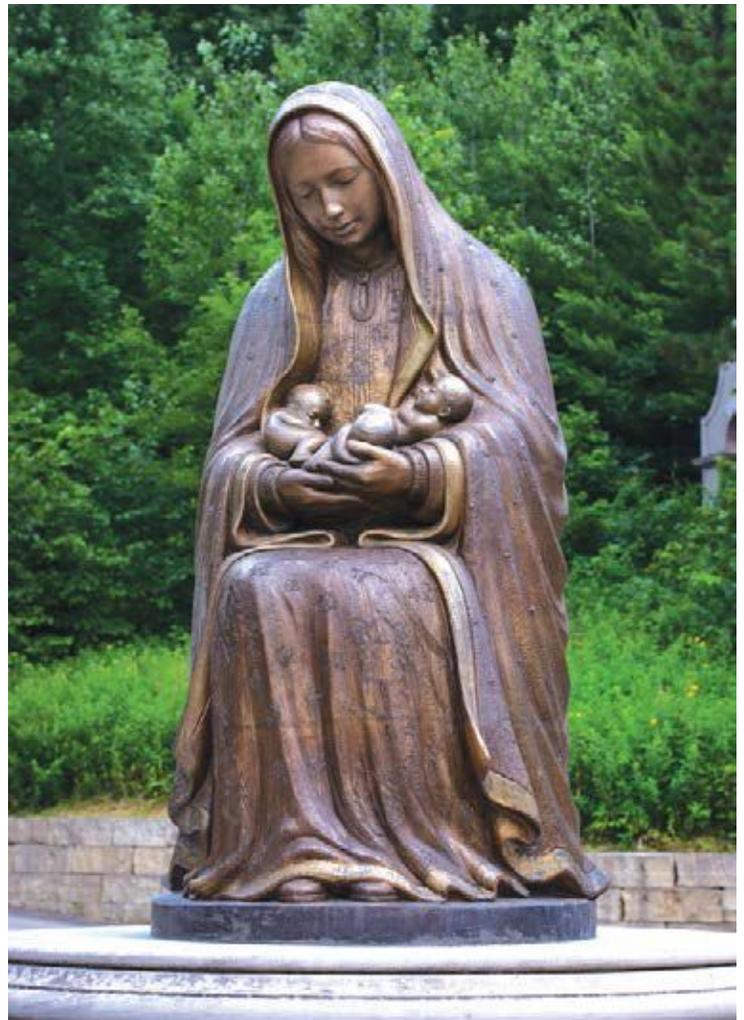
In early 2016, I will send to every Catholic household in the Diocese an invitation to dedicate or rededicate their home and family to the Holy Family. In addition, I will also send a beautiful painting or rendition of the Holy Family to every household, along with a prayer of dedication or consecration so that you can dedicate your family to the Holy Family. This will be my gift as bishop to you. Your gift to me will be the increased prayers of your family as you grow in faith together.

Husbands and fathers, I would ask you to be a spiritual father of your domestic church, your own family. Make this your number one priority and work together with your wife to provide for your children's faith formation and attendance at Sunday Mass. Research shows that when the father leads by going to Sunday Mass with his wife and family, the children are more likely to persevere in going to church and in keeping holy the Lord's day.

Wives and mothers, I would ask you to be a spiritual mother of your domestic church, your own family. Just as my own mother did, you help the house to become a home through your loving kindness and attentiveness to the needs of your family.

The following words from Pope Francis remind us of the sacrifices that many mothers make for their children: *"I think of the steadfast faith of those mothers tending their sick children who, though perhaps barely familiar with the articles of the creed, cling to a rosary; or of all the hope poured into a candle lighted in a humble home with a prayer for help from Mary, or in the gaze of tender love directed to Christ crucified."*¹⁴ You are instrumental in sustaining, nourishing and encouraging the faith of your children. Thank you for the gift of your motherhood.

In many instances, both the dad and mom are employed and working to make ends meet. This makes for a very full and hectic life. Make sure that you, as a parent, take the time to give your children the best gift of all – the gift of a strong faith and prayer life. This is a gift that will sustain your children throughout the storms of this life and one which will prepare them for the next. Servant of God Fr. Patrick Peyton, known popularly as the "Rosary Priest," said it so well, so many years ago: *"The family that prays together stays together."*

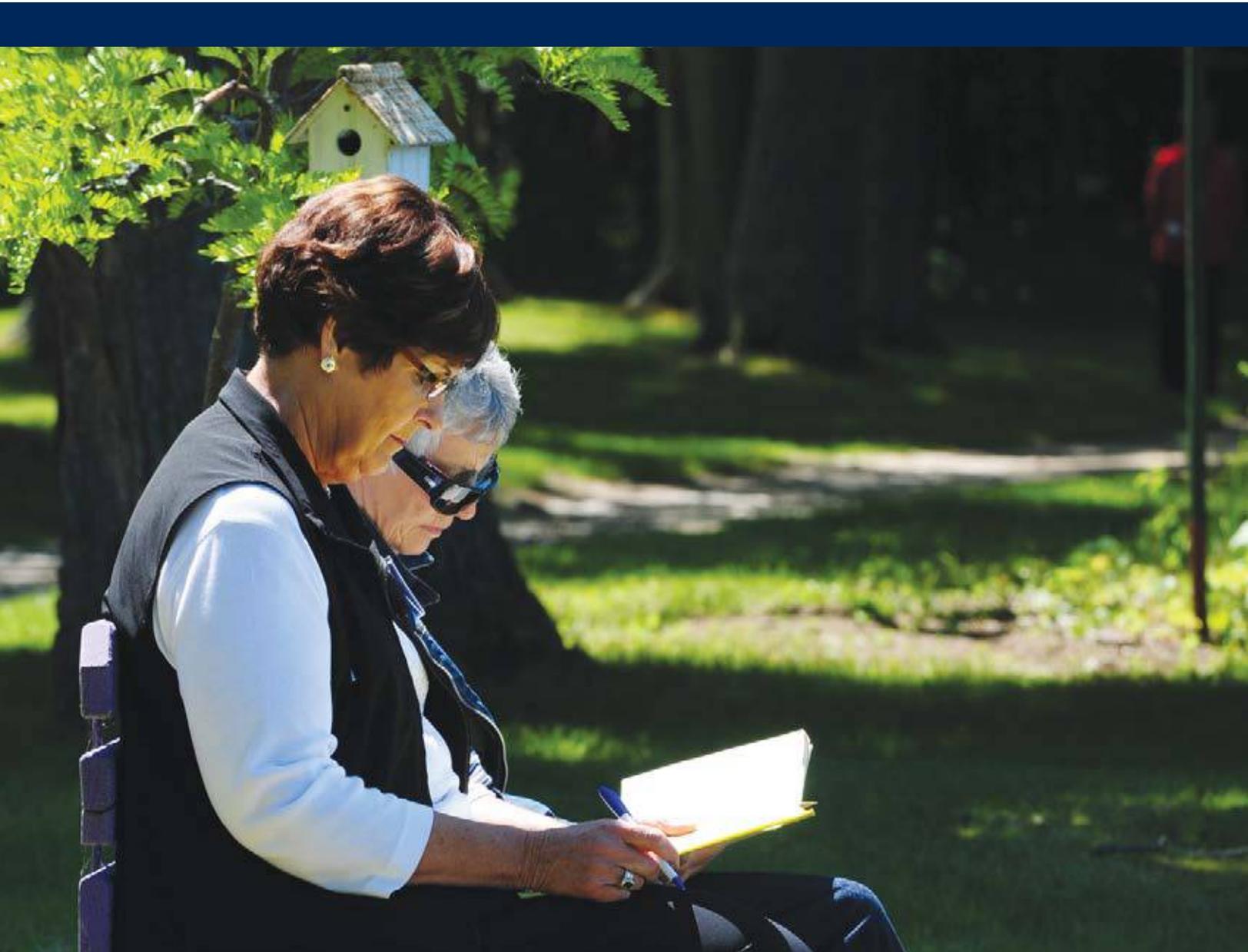


The family that prays together stays together.

Fr. Patrick Peyton

Prayer Groups, Retreat Houses, Ecclesial Movements and Organizations

An extended round of thanks ought to be given to those involved in prayer groups, in retreat ministry and in the various movements and groups of men and women who serve the Diocese and the Church in such outstanding ways. Some of you are dedicated to prayer and the spiritual life as your mission focus but all of you are certainly people of prayer as individuals and as groups and organizations. I encourage you to view your mission as to form people in the spirituality of your organization, to make sure that people are welcome to join you and to ensure that they are disciples in the Catholic tradition of prayer and in the Christian walk with Our Lord and His Church. Your work is especially important as through your ministries many opportunities for conversion abound. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document, *“Disciples Called To Witness,”* states that *“The New Evangelization does not seek to invite people to experience only one moment of conversion but rather to experience the gradual and lifelong process of conversion: to draw all people into a deeper relationship with God, to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, to develop a mature conscience, to sustain one’s faith through ongoing catechesis, and to integrate one’s faith into all aspects of one’s life.”*¹⁵ May these two years be an opportunity to connect with the Holy Spirit around the mission for which you were founded and be reenergized through the enthusiasm of new members and new interest!



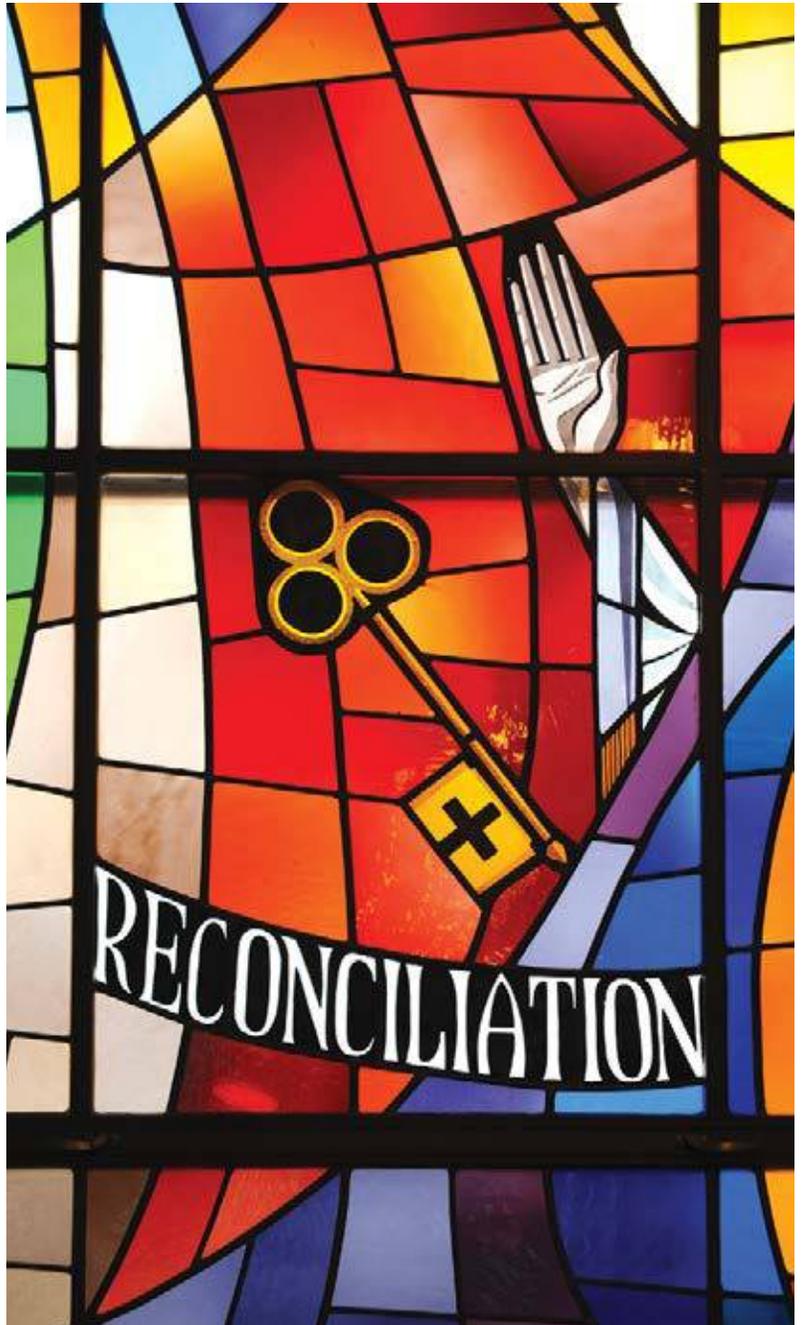
Penance and Reconciliation: The Sacrament of God's Love and Mercy

The focus on prayer for the next two years also includes a very important invitation to *come* to Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. In this sacrament, you will experience God's love and mercy abundantly poured out for you. St. Pope John Paul II reminds us that confession is the throne of Divine Mercy. If you have been away from the Church or have not made a confession in many years, please do not be afraid! Christ's merciful and loving arms are open to you in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and there are many wonderful priests in our Diocese who are excellent confessors.

This sacrament encourages all of us to turn back to God, to express sorrow for falling short and to open our lives to the power of God's healing grace. In this sacrament we are forgiven the injuries of the past and provided with strength for the future. Who are we meeting within the Sacrament of Reconciliation? It is Jesus Christ Himself. *"It is this face of Christ that must be rediscovered through the Sacrament of Penance,"* St. Pope John Paul II declared.¹⁶ The Sacrament of Reconciliation changes us, challenges us and encourages us as Disciples on the Way to be fountains of living mercy to others.

Making a daily examination of conscience can be a simple way to prepare yourself for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and

to integrate this practice into your life to hold yourself accountable, to others, to God and to yourself. The ancient practice of the *"Examen"* given to us by the Jesuit tradition is a format that helps you to reflect on your day, the things that went well, the moments when things did not go as you hoped and the invitation to Christ to renew your heart as you begin afresh the next day. You can find many different versions of an examination of conscience and the *Examen* online or in print.

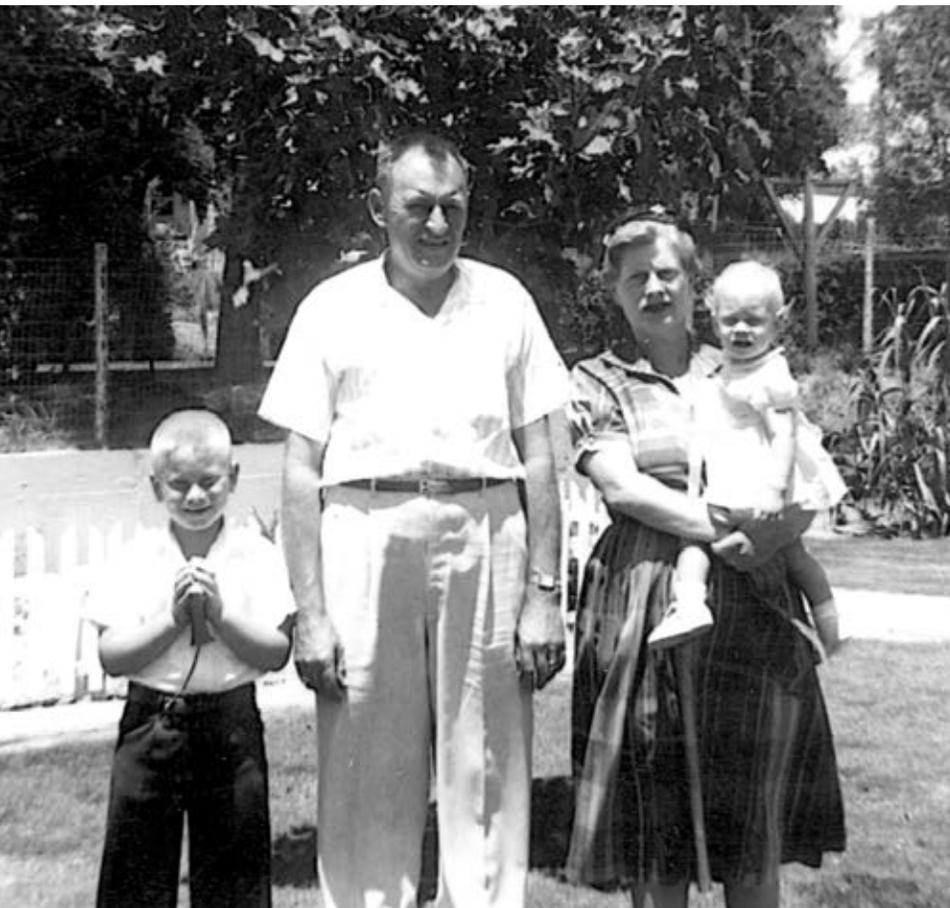


Learning to Love Sunday Mass

The greatest prayer of all is Mass and Sunday Mass is that special day of the week when the whole community comes together to give honor and glory and praise to God. This is “*Thee*” day of the week. It is the first day of the week and not the end of the weekend. It is a day of rest and recreation. It is the one day when we especially rejoice in the gift of the Eucharist, which is the food for our journey. Sunday is the day we go to church and come together as Church to give public witness in thanksgiving for the blessings of the week that has just passed and ask God for his blessings on the week ahead.

I remember as a child that we all prepared well for Sunday. Mom and Dad dressed up for Sunday Mass and made sure we did as well. We sat in the front pew so that I would behave and we would pay attention to the actions of the Mass and come to understand it. In many ways, the seeds of my own vocation to the priesthood were sown in going to Mass with my family on Sundays. The Mass was in Latin in those days. Now the Mass is in the vernacular and we are able to study and pray over the readings before going to Mass. The Sunday Mass is a time to give of the substance of our time, talent and treasure to the community and to causes of great need, an opportunity to share care and give as we move out of our own particular little world and into the communal, universal and eternal world.

Sunday can and ought to become the center point to our discipleship as individuals, as families and as parishes and faith communities. As Vatican II says, the Mass is “the source and the summit” of the Christian life. It is the source and summit of all of our prayers and meditations and Christian living throughout the week. Part of the purpose of the New Evangelization is to invite our family members and friends to return to active practice of the faith by attending Sunday Mass. The Mass is the highest form of prayer available to human beings as it is a participation in the heavenly liturgy which is filled with the abundance in comparison to our feeble attempts here on earth. “*The immense numbers of people who have not received the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot leave us indifferent,*”¹⁷ says Pope Francis, especially those in our midst.



Bishop Ricken is pictured on the left with his father and mother, Bill and Bertha Ricken, and his younger sister, Carol. His older brother, Mark, took the picture. Bishop Ricken made his first Holy Communion on Oct. 25, 1959, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Dodge City, Kan.



Sometimes people think they are excommunicated because they are divorced. If you are divorced but not remarried and are living in the state of grace, you should receive Holy Communion. For those divorced and remarried, without yet the benefit of an annulment, I invite you to still come to Sunday Mass. While you may not receive Holy Communion, you can certainly make a “spiritual communion” and work with a priest or an advocate to assist you in preparing an annulment request. As your bishop, I want you to be present, to feel welcomed and to feel loved.

Bishop Robert Banks reflects upon the person who might wonder, *“Here I am receiving Communion, year after year, Sunday after Sunday, but there seems to be no change in me. Ah, but there is a change. The person who receives Communion regularly is a person who gets used to feeling that Jesus is close. Not just someone up there, but someone very close.”*

After the Second Vatican Council, there was a general downplaying of the devotional practices, sometimes called popular religiosity. Many of the devotional practices were seen as only auxiliary or even distracting and gradually were left behind. Now, however, there is an increase in people’s desire for the return of devotional practices, especially amongst young people who are not often familiar with such practices. In the Diocese of Green Bay, a devotion to the Divine Mercy has become very popular. This devotion, which is not new but a reminder of what the Church has always taught in Scripture and tradition, focuses on God’s abundant love and mercy for each one of us – no matter how great our sins. Because of God’s abundant love and mercy we are called to embody that love and mercy to others. A prayer associated with the Divine Mercy devotion is “Jesus, I trust in You.” What a great prayer for us all to pray to increase our faith!

Fr. Alfred McBride, O.Praem., tells us that *“The Church at worship is the haven and mother of prayer. In communion with the faith of God’s people, we see the devotion of the worshipers and the richly moving rituals of Word and Sacrament in the celebration of the Eucharist. Above all, we learn in such prayer the movement of adoration to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.”*¹⁸

The Sunday Mass is the anchor of our Christian lives, and it is a great privilege to hear the Word of God every Sunday and every day if we wish. This is a powerful nourishment of our mind, our soul and our daily activities. As we strive to follow Jesus better every day and every week, to receive Him body, blood, soul and divinity, is an unfathomable privilege. To celebrate with the Body of Christ, the Church, the People of God in our parish and in our communities is a great gift. To be united with Catholics celebrating the same Mass throughout the entire world is indeed a great privilege!

As a disciple, each of us has a responsibility to reach out the way Pope Francis does, especially to the hurt, the marginalized, the broken-hearted, the rejected, and the “little ones.” Anytime we ask someone to return to the Church, we need to be prepared by praying for that person, asking the Lord in our prayer for the right time to ask them to come back home, to provide answers to their questions and to persevere in reaching out to them when they reject our offers. Sometimes it takes many, many outreaches and prayers before a person returns. But it is certainly worth it.

I encourage all of you to love the Sunday Mass and to “keep holy the Lord’s Day” as the Lord has commanded. For those of you who already love Sunday, deepen your love of this weekly event and invite others to join you as you share the wealth of your faith!

Forms of Prayer and Meditation

Mary: The First and Best of Disciples



The mother of Jesus is the very first and the very best of disciples. She was the first to know him along with St. Joseph. She bore Him, gave birth to Him and raised Him. She taught and instructed Him but she also learned from Him about the Father and the love of the Father. She was the first of disciples and our model of enduring love, patient self-sacrifice and joyful witness.

She is the most effective of all witnesses since she, from heaven, is still leading people to her Son. In learning how to be and to make disciples during the coming years, we will look to the Blessed Mother to see how she served and still serves as a witness to the Gospel. I strongly urge those who do not feel very close to Jesus to cultivate a relationship with the Blessed Mother. Praying the rosary is a powerful way to restore order to your own spiritual life and a great booster to the quality of the spiritual life in the home when the entire family prays together.

Mary has been active in the Church since her yes to the angel Gabriel. She is known by at least 52 titles in the Litany of Loretto. These are titles that she has earned through reflection, spiritual experiences and the familiarity of members of the Church over the last 2,000 years. What a gift she is to the Church, working even more energetically from heaven especially in these difficult times of ours.

For those of you who are able, I strongly urge a visit to our own Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion. Many of our schools and parish groups take pilgrimages to the Shrine and this helps us to draw closer to Mary, who in turn draws us even closer to Jesus. This is the only approved Marian apparition in the United States of America and is a great treasure to us in the Diocese of Green Bay. Many graces are flowing from Our Lady of Good Help and this is something that is quite close to home for most of us.

For those of you who are not well and may be confined to your home or a nursing home, the presence of wonderful programming on the radio and television is a great boost to your spiritual knowledge and practice. Many types of CDs, books and other resources can be a help in staying close to the Church and your faith but also for the Church to draw nearer to you. Relevant Radio, EWTN television and audio and DVD presentations are among many means available to help you deepen your prayer life. The Clerical Association of the Diocese of Green Bay has produced a series of beautiful CDs, which includes topics such as redemptive suffering, illness, God's infinite love, and divine mercy that would be a tremendous resource to strengthen you in faith. Information on these CDs and other writings can be found in the implementation guide.

Be a Friend of the Friends of Jesus, the Saints

It is a good idea to have a favorite saint. Saints are disciples who have lived a vigorous life of virtue and witness in his or her own way to the values of the Gospel and to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Those who we know are in the Kingdom of God officially are called saints because the Church has canonized them. They are each different from one another in nationality, language, personality and in their approach to Christ and to His Father. The saints are friends of Jesus who now share in eternal life with Him and all in the Kingdom of Heaven. We do not pray to the saints but we know they can be our friends and since they are in the heavenly court they like the Blessed Mother can intercede for us at the throne of God. Consider the following quote from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

“The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were ‘put in charge of many things.’ Their intercession is their most exalted service to God’s plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world” (CCC, 2683).

Along with our Mother Mary, we remember St. Joseph who intercedes for us and for the whole world as our protector and guide. Likewise, a close friend who is a saint, either the saint you received in the naming part of the ceremony at your baptism or confirmation or a saint with whom you have become a good friend over the years by reading his or her biography, can be a tremendous confidant and intercessor for your struggles and your journey in life. They are friends of the Church on earth, sometimes called the “Church militant” as they enjoy the splendor of the Kingdom of Heaven, “Church triumphant.” There are prayers and novenas one can pray every day in order to stay close to the friends of Jesus.



Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a Latin word, which means “divine reading” or more often translated as “spiritual reading,” and describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. This type of prayer is actually done with the Bible and is a great way to stay in contact with the living Word of God and become very familiar with the Bible as a book and as The Book, the inspired Word of God.

Comprised of four steps, the reader first selects a passage from Scripture. I highly recommend one of the readings from the upcoming Sunday as a way to begin. After selecting the text, the reader 1) reads (*lectio*) the text, out loud preferably. Then, the reader 2) meditates (*meditatio*) on the text. Here the text can be studied and one can picture oneself in the actual scene from the Bible watching, listening, observing. Following the reading of the text the pray-er 3) prays (*oratio*) to the Lord about the text. This involves listening and speaking about the context of the text with the Lord and applying it to oneself personally. And lastly, the reader 4) contemplates (*contemplatio*) which is resting in the conversation with the Lord and in the presence of God more deeply entered into through this process.

This ancient tradition is a beautiful way of praying with the Bible. Pope Benedict XVI says that “*the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart. If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime.*”¹⁹

Thus, *lectio divina* is critical to the New Evangelization, so that our members are energized continuously on the Word of God, both at Mass and also in our own personal or group prayer.

If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime.

Pope Benedict XVI

Pray without Ceasing

St. Paul in the Scriptures tells us that we are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). You might think: How can I do that? There are several resources in our tradition that help us to begin to live in a state of prayer despite leading a very busy life. There are simple prayer forms that are relatively easy to teach but take constant practice of the awareness of the presence of God wherever you are, no matter what you are doing. Brother Lawrence’s “*The Practice of the Presence of God*,”²⁰ written in the 14th century, and the “Jesus Prayer” emerging out of the Byzantine monastic tradition are beautiful and simple ways to carry with you a constant awareness of the Presence of Our Lord in daily life. God is closer to us than we are to ourselves and He is as close to us as is our next breath.



Summary and Concluding Points of Pastoral Reflection

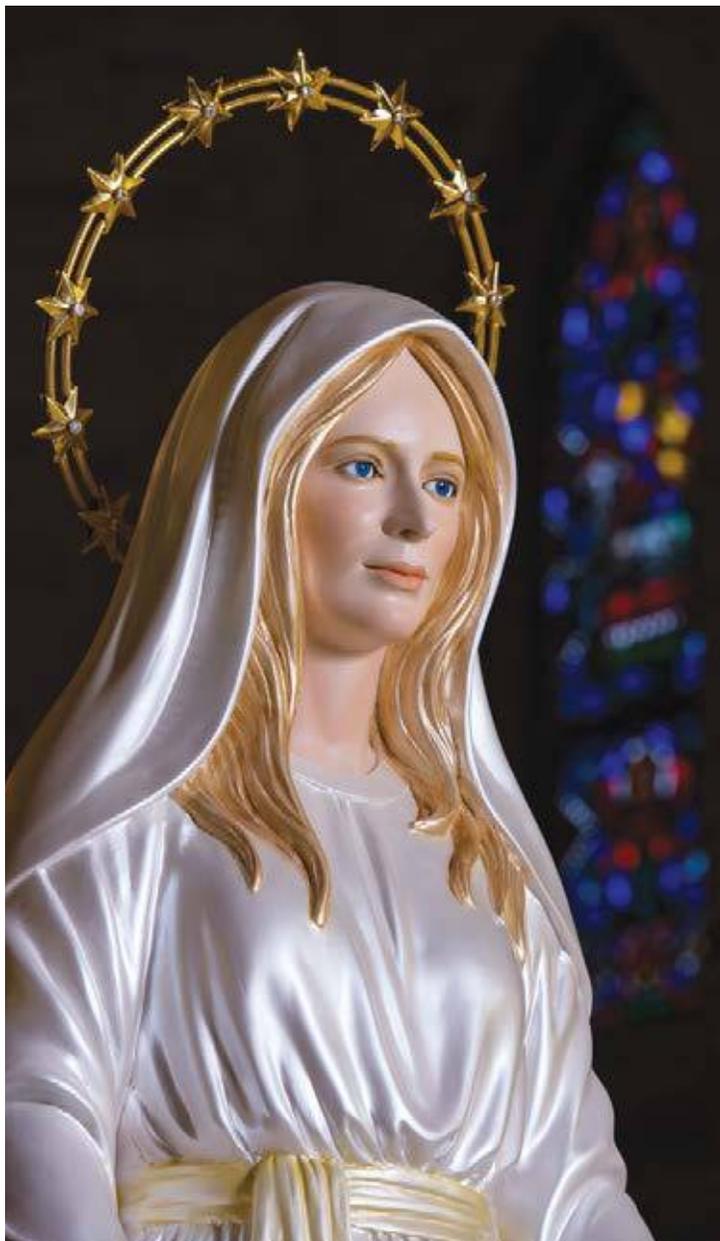


- My strong hope and desire is that those of us already engaged in the life of the Church might experience these next two years a deep renewal of our friendship with Jesus Christ and with His Body, the Church.
- I hope that during these next two years we can also teach people how to pray, especially our children and grandchildren. It is also directed to those who may have even been coming to Mass faithfully but may not understand fully how to pray the Mass or to pray and meditate on their own or in groups.
- I pray that through these two years those in need of prayer and outreach in a special way will feel our prayers and our actions directed towards them in a loving, supportive and nourishing way.
- I hope there is a renewal in the parishes and in all of the audiences I have listed and written to in this exhortation. As a strongly mentioned practice I ask that each parish have a holy hour each month to pray for all of the parishioners, the Diocese and everyone within it.
- There are many points of encouragement for all to take their spiritual life seriously and to pray for that intimate relationship with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We pray that our parishes, Catholic institutions and institutes may truly be refreshed and renewed with a new spirit of joy and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel, person by person, child by child, and day by day.
- The New Evangelization is not just another program – it is a way of life. As we become more deeply “Disciples on the Way,” being formed in prayer, discipleship and mission over the next six years, may this foundation lead us to be people of great love for Jesus Christ and His Church and may we be fully engaged and fully alive as disciples of the Lord.

Conclusion

We begin our New Evangelization efforts in the Diocese of Green Bay in prayer. I ask you to join me in hungering for the Lord in a deeper way and by asking the Holy Spirit to be bountiful in responding to our requests from the inside out. Programs will be helpful, but they are by no means the only answer. It is only when we are one-on-one, that hearts are moved when we go out to our neighbor, our family member, and those in our workplace, and we talk about Jesus. We must not be afraid to defend Him, or to defend the Church. The best way is through a one-on-one approach, and the most important one-on-one is with Our Lord in our personal prayer life, in our family prayer life, in our parish community prayer life and in unison with the Diocese and the Church throughout the world.

As my predecessor Bishop David Zubik often reminded us “Nothing is impossible with God,” and I would ask all of us to use this letter and the accompanying implementation guide to truly deepen our knowledge and trust in God. Strive to surrender your will to His will as you live out your role as a disciple; by growing in your intimacy with Christ and in your prayer life.



We entrust all of our efforts to Our Lady of Good Help who is so present to us in the Diocese of Green Bay. The Blessed Mother, as Pope Francis says, is “*the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town ‘in haste’ (Luke 1:39) to be of service to others.*”²¹ Let us too set out in haste to embrace the Lord and to reach out to those around us in prayer.

“At the beginning of our journey in the “school of prayer,” let us now ask the Lord to illumine our minds and hearts so that the relationship with Him in prayer may be ever more intense, affectionate and constant.

Once again, let us say to Him: “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1).²² This is my hope and my prayer as bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay.

Wishing you all of God’s blessings upon this next two-year period, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,

Handwritten signature of David L. Ricken

The Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL
Bishop of Green Bay

August 2014

Bishop Ricken's Coat of Arms as a Call to Prayer and Holiness

Significance

Guided by tradition, Bishop David L. Ricken's personal coat of arms is joined to the coat of arms of the Diocese of Green Bay.

The Diocesan coat of arms (left side) is divided into two areas. The upper portion contains a silver St. Andrew's cross on a field of blue. The cross symbolizes the establishment of the Christian faith in the Diocese. The ship in the center of the cross is a symbol of St. Francis Xavier, patron saint of the Diocese and the Cathedral; the ship represents the means by which the early missionaries came to the shores of Green Bay to preach the Gospel. The Indian arrowhead signifies the earliest settlers of the territory. In the lower portion, Green Bay is represented by the silver break into a field of green. The green is the earthen terrace on which the city and the Diocese of Green Bay are built.



Bishop Ricken's coat of arms (right side) follows the major concepts rendered by Archbishop Monte Zemolo, the Apostolic Nuncio to Italy. The two sections signify the frontier settlements of Fort Dodge in Kansas, which gave rise to Dodge City where Bishop Ricken was born. It was at Colorado's Fort Pueblo, which is in the Diocese of Pueblo, where he served as a priest.

The upper portion of Bishop Ricken's design contains an eight-point golden star. This honors the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Star of the New Evangelization, to whom the Bishop has great devotion and to whom he has dedicated his Episcopal ministry.

The lower portion is a red heart enwrapped by a crown of golden thorns, used to signify the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was in Dodge City's Sacred Heart Cathedral that the Bishop received his Sacraments of Initiation and at Pueblo's Sacred Heart Cathedral that he served as Parochial Vicar for five years.

The external ornaments of a gold Episcopal processional cross and a pontifical hat, called a "gallero" with six tassels, are the heraldic insignia of a prelate of the rank of bishop, by instruction of the Holy See on March 31, 1969.

Coat of Arms created by Katie L. Jagiello. Original artist Deacon Paul J. Sullivan.

Motto

For his motto, Bishop David L. Ricken uses the three Latin words: *Caritas*, *Sapientia* and *Fortitudo*. These express the three most important virtues in the Bishop's life toward which he has directed his ministry as a bishop: Charity, Wisdom and Fortitude or Courage.



Bishop David L. Ricken

David Laurin Ricken was born Nov. 9, 1952, to George William “Bill” and Bertha (Davis) Ricken in Dodge City, Kansas, the second of three children, including Mark and Carol. He was ordained a priest on Sept. 12, 1980, and on Jan. 6, 2000, he was ordained to the Episcopacy for the Diocese of Cheyenne at the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop Ricken the twelfth bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay on July 9, 2008.

Bishop Ricken is a member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Chairman of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis. He is presently a member of the Bishops’ Advisory Council for the Institute for Priestly Formation and the Catholic Mutual Relief Society.

Since childhood, Bishop Ricken has held a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as well as to St. Francis of Assisi. He enjoys teaching the basics and leading people to reflect more deeply upon the beauty of the Catholic faith, especially through contemplative prayer and the Prayer of the Heart.

Endnotes

- ¹ Benedict XVI, *A School of Prayer: The Saints Show us How to Pray*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013).
- ² *Ibid.*, pg. 9-10.
- ³ Aloysius Wycislo, *Those Who Knew Jesus* (Green Bay: Alt Publishing Co., 1993), pg. 190.
- ⁴ Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic constitution on the church. November 21, 1964, no. 40/2.
- ⁵ Francis, "Lenten Message," February 4, 2014, accessed July 31, 2014, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/len/documents/papa-francesco_20131226_messaggio-quaresima2014.html.
- ⁶ Robert Morneau, "Principles of Asceticism," *Review for Religious* 11985, v. 44.3, (1985): 410, accessed July 28, 2014, <http://thereseocds.org/uploads/misclib6.pdf>.
- ⁷ Timothy Dolan, "Address to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops," November 12, 2012.
- ⁸ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic exhortation on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world, November 24, 2013, no. 76.
- ⁹ Benedict XVI, *A School of Prayer: The Saints Show us How to Pray*, pg. 64.
- ¹⁰ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 262.
- ¹¹ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Apostolic exhortation on evangelization in the modern world, December 8, 1975, no. 26-27.
- ¹² John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, Apostolic exhortation on catechesis in our time, October 16, 1979, no. 5.
- ¹³ Francis, *Rejoice*, Letter for the year of consecrated life, June 23, 2014, no. 1.
- ¹⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 125.
- ¹⁵ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "*Disciples Called to Witness*," (Washington, D.C., 2012).
- ¹⁶ John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Apostolic letter on the beginning of the new millennium, January 6, 2001, no. 37.
- ¹⁷ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 246.
- ¹⁸ Alfred McBride, *How to Pray like Jesus and the Saints: A Study Guide for Catholics*, (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2009), pg. 13-14.
- ¹⁹ Benedict XVI, "Address at the Sacred Scripture in Life of the Church Conference," September 16, 2005.
- ²⁰ Lawrence of the Resurrection, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2010).
- ²¹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 288.
- ²² Benedict XVI, *A School of Prayer: The Saints Show us How to Pray*, pg. 14.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Photo Credits

- Cover: "Behold I stand at the Door and Knock." Icon courtesy of Br. Claude Lane, OSB, Mount Angel Abbey, Saint Benedict, Ore.
- Page 3: Victorian stained glass window showing Jesus Christ.
- Page 4: Young girl poses for a photo following her first Communion. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 6: A group of diocesan pilgrims prays the rosary at the church where Pope John Paul II was baptized in Poland. (Photo by Maria DeMeuse)
- Page 7: Pope Francis leads a meeting with the poor in the archbishop's residence in Assisi, Italy. The meeting was in the famous "stripping room," where St. Francis stripped off his rich clothes, gave them to his father and began a life of poverty dedicated to Christ. (CNS photo by Paul Haring)
- Page 8: Woman prays at Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help Assumption Mass in Champion, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 9: Fr. Peter Stryker, CPM, rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, greets one of the Walk to Mary participants. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 10: Bishop David L. Ricken blesses family. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 11: Fr. David Pleier delivers a homily during a high school Mass in Green Bay, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 12, top photo: Deacon Paul Grimm at an ordination Mass. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 12, bottom photo: Bishop David L. Ricken meets with six candidates for ordination to the diaconate. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 13: Mosaic Stations of the Cross. Marytown, Libertyville, Ill. © 2014. Used with permission.
- Page 14: Curia members of the Diocese of Green Bay at St. Joseph Chapel on the diocesan campus in Green Bay, Wis. (Photo by Clare Sturm)
- Page 15: Children take part in a rosary procession around the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 16: ENCOUNTER young adult event at St. Raphael the Archangel Parish in Oshkosh. (Photo by Zach Lulloff)
- Page 17: St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 18: St. Thomas More, Appleton, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 19: Written by the Icon Studio of the Convent of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia, Etna, Calif. www.conventofsaintelizabeth.org
- Page 20: Jubilee Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 21: A father reads to his children from the Holy Bible.
- Page 22: Holy Family stained glass window.
- Page 23: A statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, mother of the unborn, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 24: While on retreat, two women take time to reflect. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 25: Reconciliation stained glass window. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 26: Bishop David L. Ricken pictured as a child with his parents, Bill and Bertha Ricken, and his younger sister, Carol. (Photo by Mark Ricken)
- Page 27: St. Francis and St. Mary Parish in Brussels celebrates the centennial of St. Francis Xavier Church's dedication. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 28: Mary stained glass window. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 29: Statue of St. Francis Xavier, patron of the Diocese of Green Bay, in the courtyard at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay, Wis. (Photo provided by the Cathedral)
- Page 31: St. Dominic painted by Fra Angelico.
- Page 32: Stained glass image depicts the Holy Spirit. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 33: Statue of Our Lady of Good Help, located at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wis. (Photo by Sam Lucero)
- Page 35: Bishop David L. Ricken. (Photo by Harmann Studios)



Diocese of
Green Bay

1825 Riverside Drive • PO Box 23825 • Green Bay, WI 54305-3825
920-437-7531 • disciplesontheway@gbdioc.org • www.gbdioc.org