



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Office of the Bishop

November 24, 2019 Solemnity of Christ, the King of the Universe

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On this Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, which celebrates our Savior's reign over all creation, we conclude one Liturgical Year, and prepare ourselves for a new Church year, which begins next week with the First Sunday of Advent. At this convergence of the passing of one year into another, I write to you today about a matter that is of great importance to all of us as Catholics, and the most central Mystery of our Catholic faith: Jesus' Gift of Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist.

As you may know, in mid-October our Diocese sponsored an extremely successful **Eucharistic Congress** at the Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo. This first-ever event in the history of our Diocese was a wonderful celebration and a grace-filled experience for the more than 1,000 participants who attended from just about every parish in our Diocese. I am confident that the graces from this event will bear fruit for our entire Diocese for months and years to come.

I believe the enthusiastic participation in the **Eucharistic Congress** represents a true yearning for a renewed focus on the most Precious Gift of the Eucharist. It is in response to this deep-seated longing for communion with Jesus Christ, that I have written a new pastoral letter to all the Faithful in our Diocese which I will be sharing with all of you in the very near future. This letter, which I have entitled: "*Loving God and our Neighbor: Living the Mission of the Eucharist*," * discusses why now, perhaps more than ever before, we are being called to be Missionary Disciples of Jesus Christ our King, inspired and motivated through the spiritual nourishment given to us in the Eucharist to go forth and be models of Christ's love for all people.

I believe that we can all greatly benefit from an extended amount of time focusing on the need for us to renew our understanding and love for this Precious Gift of Jesus' Real Presence with us in the Eucharist. For that reason, I am proclaiming "**A Year of the Eucharist**" to be observed in all parishes and institutions of our Diocese during the calendar year 2020. Throughout this year of prayer, reflection and action, we plan to have many opportunities at both the diocesan and parish level to grow more deeply in our love for Jesus.

My dear Family of Faith, it is not my intention that this "Year of the Eucharist" be filled with a lot of "busy-ness", or with many special programs or activities; rather it is my hope that this special Year will result primarily in a renewed love for Jesus, whose Real Presence we encounter in the Eucharist. Through prayer and the grace of God, may that renewed love for Jesus lead us to a deeper devotion to the Eucharist and a more prayerful celebration of the Mass, while at the same time, leading us to a greater involvement with our Parish communities, and an increased outreach to those in need through our participation in the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

As Pope Francis said during a Sunday *Angelus* reflection: "*The missionary disciple has first of all a center, a point of reference, which is the Person of Jesus.*" Through our love for Jesus in the Eucharist, may He be our "point of reference" in enabling us to see His Presence in the poor, the immigrant, the hungry, the thirsty, the imprisoned, and in all those in need.

May our "**Year of the Eucharist**" be a grace-filled time in the life of our Diocese resulting in a genuine outpouring of Eucharistic devotion and a renewed sense of mission. And may all of us experience a profound reawakening of our awareness and love for the Eucharistic Mystery that will inspire us in our faith, and propel us forward in all that we do in Jesus' name.

Praying that our Loving God will bless you and your families in these days of Thanksgiving, and as we continue **waiting in joyful hope** during the upcoming blessed Advent Season of our new Liturgical Year, and asking for your continued prayers for me and for our Diocese, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo

*Visit www.diokzoo.org to download a digital copy of *Loving God and Your Neighbor: Living the Mission of the Eucharist*