



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Renew Faith • Build Communion • Inspire Hope

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

September 14, 2022

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On this glorious Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, by which Jesus conquered the Evil One for all time and won salvation for all humanity, I greet you in the love of our Savior.

Today, I have issued a decree announcing what I hope will be an historic moment in the life of our local Church. For the first time in our 51 years as a Diocese, we will be celebrating a diocesan synod; a process that begins today and will conclude around the Feast of Pentecost in 2023. This is also most appropriate following the Golden Jubilee celebrating the establishment of our Diocese that took place last year.

A diocesan synod is a process of listening and discernment that concludes with an “assembly” of selected priests, consecrated religious, and lay members of Christ’s Faithful in a particular church (Diocese), which the diocesan bishop consults for the good of the whole diocesan community, as he seeks assistance in to carrying out the Office of Governance (*shepherding*) that is proper to him. A synod is an opportunity for free discussion of the matters and issues proposed by the bishop for the building up of the faithful as the Mystical Body of Christ, for the purpose of strengthening the communion and mission that are necessary for the Church’s pastoral activity and for the good of the entire diocesan community.

As this “Year for Priestly Spiritual Renewal and Prayer for Vocations” has begun, and in light of the present circumstances of our society, there is a need for the strengthening of faith for all of us, beginning with the spiritual renewal of our priests and prayer for an increase in Vocations to the priesthood here in our diocese. It is my hope that this time of renewal, in turn, will deeply impact the life of the faithful. Given this need, and after consultation with the Presbyteral Council, the Preparatory Phase of the synod begins today, with the formal sessions of the synod to take place at the end of this “Year of Priestly Spiritual Renewal and Prayer for Vocations” (cf. Canon 461). This Preparatory Phase will directly involve each member of the faithful of the diocese, both through the spiritual support of prayer and through opportunities to contribute through the listening sessions that will be made available in the near future.

Therefore, I ask that you join with me in praying for the success of the synod, and that the Lord and Savior will bless our efforts in building up the Church in Southwest Michigan. Entrusting this intention to the maternal prayers of our Immaculate Mother and Mother of the Church and St. Augustine, our Diocesan Patrons, and in gratitude for your prayerful assistance, I remain,

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ Paul J. Bradley

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo