



# SHINING CHRIST'S LIGHT

S U N R I S E T O S U N S E T



*A Mutually Shared Vision*

NOVEMBER 24, 2013 | FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING



# SHINING CHRIST'S LIGHT

SUNRISE TO SUNSET

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*A Mutually Shared Vision*



DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Year of Faith has been a graced time for the Diocese of Gaylord. Throughout the twenty-one counties of this local Church, various opportunities have taken place to rediscover the content of the faith that we together profess, pray, celebrate and live. Renewed in our faith and enriched by the many graces that we have received in this Year of Faith, it is only fitting that we as a diocese take a moment to assess our present situation, to clarify our goals, and to consider what we must do to share our experience of Jesus' saving love and mercy in a world that thirsts for His presence.

For the past 18 months the Diocese of Gaylord, under the leadership of our former bishop, the Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda (recently named Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark, N.J.), has been involved in an extensive process to discern a mutually shared vision for the Catholic Church in Northern Lower Michigan. Funded in large part through a grant from the Catholic Extension Society, and facilitated by professionals from the Catholic Leadership Institute based in Pennsylvania, the Bishop and the directors of the diocesan secretariats prayed and reflected on their individual and collective experiences and observations, as well as the needs and dreams expressed by the faithful of the diocese both formally and informally. The process included hosting listening sessions in parishes throughout the Diocese in 2012 to receive input, believing that the Lord is present whenever two or three gather in His name and He blesses the faithful of His Church with an unerring sense of the faith.

Through the envisioning process, three areas surfaced as priorities for the Church in the Diocese of Gaylord: Evangelization, Faith Formation and Communications. We were also led to define our reason for existing as a diocese, to reclaim our sacred purpose as being: "In response to God's love, the Faithful of the Diocese of Gaylord, relying upon the Sacraments, Catholic Tradition, and Prayer, seek to form a community that hopes in Christ, shares the Good News and lives the Gospel of justice and peace."

We are a Church called to a mutually shared vision to be witnesses to God's love by ***"Shining Christ's Light: Sunrise to Sunset."***

## THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY THAT IS BEFORE US

*"The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken and summoned the earth  
from the rising of the sun to its setting." (PSALM 50:1)*

Times have changed. As in other parts of our country, a strong current of secularism threatens to restrict expressions of faith to the privacy of one's home or to the four walls of our Churches. Conscience rights that were once sacrosanct are no longer respected and even the existence of moral absolutes, of right and wrong, has been drawn into question by the relativism of our day. Our society, moreover, seems to be encouraging an exaggerated individualism that puts personal needs and pleasures above obedience to the Divine Will or considerations of the common good, creating a devastating strain on marriages and family life and affecting other vocations as well.

These trends are not only at the international and national levels, but also in our shared life here in Northern Michigan, in our own families, and perhaps often in our own hearts or own thinking. They are not just abstract concepts that merit discussion in textbooks and encyclicals, but challenges that we face in our everyday life that hold us back from being and building the Church that Christ intended, the Church for which He offered His very body and blood.

In an age in which the teachings of Christ, our brother and model, are increasingly muffled and marginalized, it's not surprising that many would lose sight of God's love and ignore His plan for our happiness. In a society that doesn't have time for God, how can we appreciate the gift of being created in His image and likeness or know that we have a dignity that comes from being His sons and daughters, from being summoned to give Him glory from sunrise to sunset? How easy it is to fall victim to the fallacy that our worth is somehow based on our employment or looks or wallet or title or usefulness. No wonder we hear of many in our communities who, faced with unemployment or poverty or rejection or a decline in strength or health, have tried to numb their pain through substance abuse or the unbridled pursuit of self-destructive pleasures.

Throughout the listening sessions, many asked how a shrinking Catholic community could turn back that tide and make a difference in our society. It is not that different from the questions that faced the Apostles and early Christians, who could have easily felt overwhelmed by the persecution that they faced. Yet, they gradually came to recognize the strength that was theirs in Jesus. Their pockets may have been empty, and at times their hands or legs were even shackled, but they had their faith—and that changed everything. For those early Christians, the healing encounter between St. Peter and the lame beggar on the steps of the temple, recounted in the Acts of the Apostles, must have been a game-changer: "Neither silver or gold have I," said St. Peter, "but what I have I offer in the name of Jesus: get up and walk." (Acts 3:6)

One should never lose sight of all that can be accomplished when, as men and women of faith; people strive to do the Lord's work and are willing to share with others the greatest gift they possess, Jesus! By the Creator's design, it is only Jesus who can satisfy our deepest longings. As the great convert, Saint Augustine of Hippo, recognized and prayed: "our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in thee." An encounter with Jesus changes everything.



For 2000 years, the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, has been striving to lead the world to an authentic encounter with Jesus and the good news that he proclaimed. The light that Christ can shed on our identity and destiny is as needed today as it was when He walked the streets of Galilee. He foresaw that need and established the Church to be a living witness to His life, death and resurrection, capable of shining His light on the questions of every age. It is with that in mind that we seem particularly called in the present day to offer to a society darkened by confusion the light that we have experienced in our Church's teachings on the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, the sacredness of marriage and the family, the call to be peacemakers, and the need to care for God's creation. We share those teachings not to be judgmental but because we believe that they are rooted in the teachings of Jesus, the One who identified Himself as "the Truth," the One who knows how and why we were created, the only One who can calm the restlessness of the human heart.

We can only proclaim our Christ-centered message with credibility, however, if others are able to see in our lives the peace and strength that comes from believing in Jesus Christ and allowing Him to be our Lord. What a powerful example we have been given in our Holy Father, Pope Francis, whose personal humility, simplicity and trust in divine providence have opened the hearts of so many to the love of Jesus and the compelling truth of the Gospel.

Pope Francis recently offered some valuable insights into how the Good News can be shared with credibility and success: Noting that Jesus sent His followers out with "no purse, no bag, no sandals" (Luke 10:4), Pope Francis observed, "The spread of the Gospel is not guaranteed either by the number of persons, or by the prestige of the institution, or by the quantity of available resources. What counts is to be permeated by the love of Christ, to let oneself be led by the Holy Spirit and to graft one's own life onto the tree of life, which is the Lord's Cross."

From that perspective, it would seem that the considerable challenges that we face as the Diocese of Gaylord can become opportunities for spreading the light of the Gospel if we would only open ourselves to be more completely permeated by the love of Christ, allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, and graft ourselves onto the wood of the Cross.



## A P L A N F O R T H E J O U R N E Y

*"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"*

(JOHN 20:21-22)

It is the Lord Himself who has summoned us to collaborate with Him in making the Good News known from the rising of the sun to its setting. In spite of our weaknesses, He has claimed us as His own and poured out His Spirit upon us. We may have "no purse, no bag, no sandals" as we head out for the work of spreading the Gospel but we carry with us a number of deeply-held values around which we as a community of believers have been formed, values that gave shape to the earliest Christian communities, values that uniquely shaped the history of this diocese in its first four decades, and values that we consistently heard expressed in each of the listening sessions and now feel called to honor as we move forward. Let us reflect on five of those expressed values: 1) Prayer and Worship; 2) Catechesis; 3) Evangelization; 4) *Communio*; and 5) Service. Each of these values are explained in greater detail within these pages. Our fidelity to these five key values will allow us to be permeated by the love of Christ, to be led by the Holy Spirit and to graft ourselves onto the Tree of Life.

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***Prayer and Worship: We are called to pray always, as a Church formed and sustained by the Eucharist, giving praise to the Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit.***

*"From the rising of the sun to its setting, may the name of the Lord be praised!"*

(PSALM 113:3)

As St. Paul reminded the Thessalonians, we are called to "pray without ceasing" and to "give thanks in all circumstances." (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18) The development of that posture of constant prayer and that attitude of gratitude is foundational for our mission. The Gospels give us a powerful example in the very person of Jesus, who is consistently presented as a man of prayer. He prayed for strength and courage. He prayed in quiet and in thanksgiving. He prayed regularly in community. He instructed us about prayer and indeed taught us to pray, giving us the "Our Father."

It was Jesus, moreover, who gave us the Eucharist, the most perfect prayer, which allows us to be one with Him in giving praise to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. It was Jesus, in fact, who instituted each of the seven sacraments; those outward signs that actually confer the grace they signify.

It is no surprise, then, that the Church should be so concerned with prayer and liturgy. That is certainly our heritage in the Diocese of Gaylord. Recognizing that it is the Eucharist that forms the Church, our first Bishop, Cardinal Edmund Szoka, understood that one of his first tasks would be to build a Cathedral that would embody the teachings



of the Second Vatican Council on liturgy and the Eucharist and that would facilitate and encourage our common prayer. Our second bishop, Bishop Robert Rose, is still remembered as a man of prayer who celebrated the Eucharist with great reverence and inspired others to do the same. Bishop Patrick Cooney, our third bishop, built on that foundation and led the diocese in a sustained two-decade reflection on the liturgy that has blessed us with a reputation as a diocese with dynamic parish liturgies, particularly well-formed priests and liturgical ministers, and congregations that truly embrace the call to be a Eucharistic community and recognize that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* #10; and *Catechism* #1324) Our fourth bishop, Archbishop Bernard Hebda, invited us to renew and refocus ourselves in living out the mystery of the Eucharist in our everyday life situations.

From the listening sessions it was clear we need to do more to promote the Sacrament of Reconciliation as an encounter with God’s mercy. The listening sessions also revealed both a hunger for increased opportunities for prayer outside of Sunday Mass and a desire for a respect for the Church’s treasure chest of devotions, forms of prayer that have traditionally supported Catholics in the life of faith without in any way obscuring the importance of the Mass. In many parts of the diocese, the faithful have expressed a desire for the possibility of participation more regularly at daily Mass, for the Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and various types of devotions. Knowing we have more parishes than priests and recognizing that many of our parishes are small, it is going to be important that greater collaboration and coordination take place among neighboring parishes in the scheduling and sponsoring of liturgies and devotions.

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***Catechesis: We go forth and teach all nations by deepening our knowledge of Christ and His teachings so as to share them faithfully as passed on by and through the Church since the time of the Apostles.***

*“Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations....teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (MATTHEW 28:19)*

While excelling in liturgical prayer, the Church in our part of Northern Michigan also has a rich catechetical tradition, placing a high priority on the transmission of the teachings of Christ and preparation for the sacraments, a task involving not only clergy and religious but also laity. When Venerable Frederic Baraga first arrived at Harbor Springs, accompanied by the Bishop of Cincinnati, he marveled that the Bishop was immediately presented with twenty-four candidates for Baptism and thirty candidates for Confirmation, all “humbly and competently prepared” by “their own Chief Assiginak.”

While it is recognized that parents are to be the primary educators of their children in the faith, the Church takes seriously its responsibility to support parents in that role. In our day, that requires that the Church not only offer catechetical formation for parents and other adults but also provide opportunities for children and young adults to learn the tenets of our faith.

In the course of the listening sessions, the need for comprehensive faith formation, meeting the needs of all age groups, emerged as a principal priority for the diocese.



An appreciation for present and past programming was expressed, but it was clear that the faithful of the diocese desired more, noting that the circumstances of our day presented a greater need than ever for instruction on Church teaching, in part because of the magnitude of the societal pressures challenging our beliefs and in part because of a perceived deficiency in the catechesis many of today's parents and grandparents received in the 60's, 70's and 80's as paradigms for religious instruction shifted. They questioned whether today's children and teenagers were receiving the tools they would need to be Catholic adults.

A further area of concern centered on the affordability and viability of our Catholic schools. The excellence and effectiveness of those schools has long been recognized locally, and in recent years that excellence is gaining even national attention. At a time when dioceses with far greater resources are closing Catholic schools, remarkably there has not been even a single school closure in the Diocese of Gaylord in the past decade, even though the general school-age population in our region continues to decline. With the collaboration of excellent parish leadership, insightful diocesan superintendents, cooperative teachers and courageous parents, our schools have been skillfully retailored to meet the present needs.

We need to find ways of making faith formation a priority for parents and young people who face so many other pressures on their time. At the same time, we need to make sure that we are presenting for all age groups high quality instruction by qualified teachers, taking advantage of parish and diocesan resources and best practices. We also need to learn to utilize the many and varied gifts that exist within our communities while forming the faithful with a genuine spiritual sense of stewardship as we seek to fulfill our mission to bring all of our children to Jesus and help them to reach their human potential.

**Evangelization: We bring the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel.**

*"Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."* (MARK 16:15)

Evangelization is not simply a project: it has to be a way of life. By its very essence, the Church has to be engaged in missionary efforts. Christ came to gather the sheep and we are now called to continue that labor of love. Cardinal Francis George, the Archbishop of Chicago, has insightfully noted on more than one occasion that it is more appropriate to speak of "the mission having a Church" than "the Church having a mission."

"Evangelization" at its core means facilitating an encounter with the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. To "evangelize" is to spread the Gospel, to give people an encounter with Jesus. Population figures for our region reveal that we have a golden opportunity for missionary efforts. Government statistics tell us that in most of our diocese more than 50% of the population is unaffiliated with any religion. Moreover, while much of the decline we have experienced in our Catholic population can be attributed to relocation of young people in search of work and educational opportunities, we also know from our own experience that the number of Catholics who remain in our diocese but no longer practice the faith is considerable.





Those who participated in the listening sessions spoke primarily about the latter reality – the number of Catholics who for a whole host of reasons have either gradually drifted from the Church or chosen to leave. They shared that our pews would be full if we could re-energize our Catholic population. The problem is not limited to the Diocese of Gaylord but we acutely feel the pain of being weakened by their absence, particularly when those who have left are our family members, neighbors, colleagues and friends.

The most common question concerns how we are to go about the work of evangelization. Blessed John Paul II (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 1979), and Pope Benedict XVI (*Homily opening the Synod of the New Evangelization*, 2012), both spoke about our age's need for a "new evangelization," a way of evangelizing that involves "new vigor, new methods, and a new expression." Consideration of ways in which we might make our parishes more welcoming of current parishioners as well as those who are not Catholic or who have fallen away from the regular practice of the faith also needs to take place.

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***Communio: We participate in the love shared by the Trinity to heal divisions and bring all toward union with God.***

*"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit." (1 CORINTHIANS 12:13)*

In spite of its relatively young age, the Diocese of Gaylord has already been blessed with a very clear identity and sense of unity. Bishop Szoka is especially to be credited with his literally groundbreaking work in creating, in a relatively short time, a unified diocese from portions of two very distinct dioceses (Grand Rapids and Saginaw).

The work of creating and maintaining unity is by no means finished. There is a need to redouble our efforts to promote the Sacrament of Reconciliation (described earlier in this reflection) and hope that those efforts will be beneficial for maintaining the unity of our families and parishes, the building blocks of our local Church.

There is also much to be done to strengthen our commitment in unity to the work of the Church even beyond our parish boundaries. As becomes apparent each year at the time of the Catholic Services Appeal, there is a need to develop a greater sense of shared responsibility for the work of the diocese and of the Universal Church. It would seem one way of addressing that need would be to make sure the various consultative bodies in the diocese are representative of the local Church, bringing together people from various areas and viewpoints, and to make sure these groups are appropriately utilized in the diocesan decision-making process.

Those who participated in our listening sessions also pointed to the need for more effective communication if we are to be a unified Church. They noted that there often seems to be gaps in communication, with people in the pew not being aware of what is going on in the diocese or in neighboring parishes, and with diocesan officials not realizing what is being scheduled and undertaken in our parishes.

To promote a greater sense of communion in the Church, we need to be mindful of the call to be an inclusive Church that respects distinct cultures and their contribution to the faith. In this regard, we need to make sure we are recognizing, for example, the valuable

contribution to the unified fabric of our Church that can be made by the members of the Hispanic and Native American communities, finding ways to support them in their unique expression of the faith not only for their spiritual benefit but also for the benefit of the diocese as a whole. We would be weakened as a Diocesan Church, moreover, if we ever lost sight of the significant spiritual and material needs of the migrant workers who labor among us for parts of the year. Christian solidarity requires we be aware of the particular pressures they and their families face when challenged by health issues, indebtedness, or immigration difficulties.

Parishioners expressed their concerns that the unity of our Church is diminished when we fail to embrace our Catholic brothers and sisters who are divorced or separated from their spouses and who so often feel alone and excluded from Church life. We also need to be attentive to those who are divorced and remarried, even without the benefit of a declaration of nullity. As Pope Benedict XVI noted, "the divorced and remarried continue to belong to the Church, which accompanies them with special concern and encourages them to live as fully as possible the Christian life through regular participation at Mass, albeit without receiving communion, listening to the word of God, Eucharistic adoration, prayer, participation in the life of the community, honest dialogue with a priest or spiritual director, dedication to the life of charity, works of penance, and commitment to the education of their children." (*Sacramentum Caritatis* 29)

Another issue in building a more unified Diocesan Church is the need for a greater recognition of the special needs of our brothers and sisters with disabilities of many sorts and the importance of making sure they are able to participate in the life of our parishes.

Two additional groups identified in the course of the listening sessions as requiring additional outreach would be our youth and young adults. In addition to the catechetical efforts mentioned earlier, it is recognized the demands of *communio* require that we increase our efforts to involve young people in the ministries and life of the Church. While many of our parishes strive to include high school students as liturgical ministers and catechists, there are still many young people, both teens and young adults, who lament their efforts and offers to serve the Church have been ignored.

One particularly hopeful sign in the area of youth and young adult ministry is the number of young men who are actively discerning priesthood as diocesan seminarians or members of religious communities and the number of young women who are similarly engaged in discerning whether the Lord might be calling them to various forms of consecrated life. The seeds for such loving trust on the part of these young people surely reflect not only the fervent prayers of the faithful for this intention and the existence of supportive parents, parish communities, pastors and vocation directors, but also the great work that has been undertaken by so many of our parish youth ministers.

In addition to all that is being done to promote unity and *communio* within the diocese, we also recognize the charge that we have received to work for unity on the broader plane as well. Since entering into a sister-relationship ("*hermanamiento*" in Spanish) with the Diocese of Matagalpa in 2004, we have been earnestly striving to build solidarity between our two local Churches.

The goal of building *communio* also extends to our efforts to build relationships with those who have been baptized outside of the Catholic Church. While most of the work of ecumenism takes place at the parish level and is lived out in our communities, particularly in our common works of charity, we recognize that there also needs to be a diocesan component. The covenant that was signed more than a decade ago by the leadership and



members of the North/West Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan and the Diocese of Gaylord continues to bind us in a particular way with our Lutheran and Episcopalian brothers and sisters.

***Service: We imitate the Lord, who came to serve rather than to be served, by pouring ourselves out to meet the spiritual and material needs of our brothers and sisters.***

*“For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (MARK 10:45)*

A deeper awareness of God’s generosity to us inevitably produces a sense of appreciation and love that has to be expressed in service. The involvement of our Catholic faithful in parish and community efforts to serve those in need – whether they be poor, homeless, hungry, without required documents, mentally ill, imprisoned, burdened by addiction, unexpectedly pregnant, in abusive relationships, or otherwise in need of help or healing – is admirable. This is another area where Pope Francis has given us great leadership and example and where he is calling us to be even more generous, not just taking care of physical needs but treating those in need as brothers and sisters with great dignity.

The example of service is routinely offered in all of our parishes by the many volunteers who respond to the call to offer their time, talent and treasure for the building up of their parishes. While many volunteer their time on their own as individuals, we surely owe a great debt of gratitude to the various lay groups, such as the St. Vincent DePaul societies, who make service an important element or purpose of their organization. On the diocesan level, who could deny the contribution made by the Knights of Columbus, the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and the Daughters of Isabella? The faithful of the diocese, moreover, have had a long tradition of exemplary service in support of expectant mothers and unborn children and there is need to continue to encourage those efforts.

Christian service also continues to be offered in the many ways in which the diocese seeks to work for justice and peace. The diocesan Secretariat for Justice and Peace is well respected throughout our state, particularly in the area of immigrant rights, Comprehensive Immigration Reform and fair trade. The Secretariat’s work is primarily focused on emphasizing the dignity of every human person through a Catholic lens by promoting awareness of justice issues at home and around the world, and encouraging political advocacy on the local, state, national, and global levels. As a diocese, we need to collaborate more fully with the Michigan Catholic Conference in the building of a Catholic Legislative Advocacy Network so that the faithful may be informed and engaged in the political process as legislative issues related to the social teaching of the Catholic Church are deliberated on the State level.

We are especially blessed to have Catholic Human Services providing a vast array of services throughout our 21 counties. The agency is highly recognized for their hope-filled social, emotional and spiritual support to all people, regardless of income or faith



affiliation, providing mental health, substance abuse, prevention, pregnancy counseling, open adoption, social services and senior services to over 26,000 people per year. Particularly in these times of such economic hardship, we must do all we can to ensure those who need help continue to have access to services close to home.

As a diocese we have particularly benefitted not only from the example of those early religious women and men whose prayers and selfless ministry helped to provide a firm foundation for the Catholic faith in our area, but those who continue that tradition by sharing their gifts with us today. Our permanent deacons remind us of the importance of imitating Christ by emptying ourselves in service through their daily ministry so it is not surprising that their fine service in our diocese would be inspiring more men to discern the call to the diaconate. At the same time, throughout our diocese, faithful lay men and women shine the light of Christ as witnesses of God's love as they volunteer in their parishes and communities to help heal the broken.

## OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

*"If the Lord does not build the house, in vain does the builder labor." (PSALM 127:1)*

The prophet Joel foresaw that when the Spirit would be poured out upon us, "your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." (Joel 3:1b) In this time of waiting and preparation for our fifth bishop, we need to prayerfully consider how the Lord is calling us to work towards the building of Christ's kingdom in the twenty-one counties that constitute the Diocese of Gaylord. During the coming months, six teams comprised of laity and clergy from throughout the diocese, will continue to reflect upon the three priority areas of Evangelization, Faith Formation and Communications as identified through our planning process. They will strive to learn about the principles and best practices of these components of being Church specifically in relation to creating welcoming parish environments, re-igniting the flames of evangelization, encouraging the faithful to life-long catechesis, re-envisioning stewardship as sharing our gifts in response to God's love, enhancing communications strategies, and positioning our parishes and schools to take advantage of technological advances. The continued prayer, discussion and input of all the faithful will continue to be important in the process as well. Specific recommendations will ultimately be presented to the new bishop for his reflection and consideration.

While the Faithful of the Diocese can rightfully take pride in the accomplishments of these past four decades, we need to always make sure that the "house" that we are together building is the Lord's. With the Lord's help and "relying upon the Sacraments, Catholic Tradition and Prayer," we will make progress as we "seek to form a community that hopes in Christ, shares the Good News and lives the Gospel of justice and peace."



**SHINING CHRIST'S LIGHT**  
S U N R I S E T O S U N S E T



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD MUTUALLY SHARED VISION

### **Our Sacred Purpose:** *Why we exist as a diocese*

In response to God's love, the Faithful of the Diocese of Gaylord, relying upon the Sacraments, Catholic Tradition, and Prayer, seek to form a community that hopes in Christ, shares the Good News and lives the Gospel of justice and peace.

### **Our Core Values:** *How we will decide, communicate, and behave as a diocese*

#### **Prayer and Worship:**

We are called to pray always, as a Church formed and sustained by the Eucharist, giving praise to the Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

#### **Catechesis:**

We go forth and teach all nations by deepening our knowledge of Christ and his teachings so as to share them faithfully as passed on by and through the Church since the time of the Apostles

#### **Evangelization:**

We bring the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel.

#### **Communio:**

We participate in the love shared by the Trinity to heal divisions and bring all toward union with God.

#### **Service:**

We imitate the Lord, who came to serve rather than to be served, by pouring ourselves out to meet the spiritual and material needs of our brothers and sisters



**Our 5 Year Statement Of Vision: *Where we are going, as a diocese, through 2018***

***Shining Christ's Light: Sunrise to Sunset***

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**Our 3 Priorities: *What we will address and develop over a 24 month period***

**Evangelization**

1. At least 40 parishes have fully implemented diocesan protocols for creating a welcoming parish environment by Jan 1, 2015.
2. At least 50 parishes have no less than one team participating in an ongoing training process for empowering the faithful in evangelization by July 31, 2014.

**Communication**

1. Raise (\$2M) to advance the use of technologies and provide training to unify the diocese (chancery, parishes, schools and institutions) by January 24, 2015.
2. Publish a model reflecting best practices for communications throughout the diocese by September 29, 2014.

**Faith Formation**

1. At least 20 parishes in the diocese have successfully implemented a comprehensive approach to stewardship by May 24, 2015.
2. At least a 25% increase in the number of parishes in each vicariate having met or exceeded diocesan guidelines for lifelong faith formation by September 20, 2015.



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD'S PRAYER FOR A NEW BISHOP

*“So you, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well.”*

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

Good and Gracious God,  
we praise you and we thank you  
for all the good shepherds that keep watch  
over us here in the Diocese of Gaylord  
these last 40 years.

Heavenly Father,  
in your eternal and boundless love,  
send to us, your flock, a new bishop shepherd  
who will continue the mission  
of leading, tending, and building  
your Church here in Northern Michigan.

Send forth your Holy Spirit to inspire  
the hearts and minds of those empowered  
by Pope Francis to choose the best shepherd for us.

And when asked, may the Holy Spirit inspire him,  
and stoke the fire of love for you  
already burning brightly in his heart.  
May he lovingly accept and never tire of  
the challenges and responsibilities  
of Bishop of Gaylord.

Always keep him safe and in your loving care.  
Inspire him to lead and build up our Church,  
with the Word of God, the strength of the  
sacraments, a servant's care for all,  
and a deep love for You,

We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
your Son and our Lord,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen

WRITTEN BY DEACON PAUL FIFER | OCTOBER 2013



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