



# "Growing in Faith, Living in Hope, and Giving in Love."

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Each year during our Lenten journey we are called upon to focus on the three main pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Many of us will renew and refocus on some age-old spiritual practices such as the Stations of the Cross or the attendance at daily Mass. Those required to fast experience the fruits of self-sacrifice whether it's a favorite treat you've "given-up" or the foregoing of eating meat on Fridays. The last pillar, almsgiving, allows us an opportunity to exercise our generosity and care for those in need as an expression of our gratitude for all God has given to us. Our hearts and minds are focused on those in need and on our own sacrifice.



Today, I make this heartfelt request during the Lenten season for your generous support for the Bishop's Annual Appeal. This annual appeal [formerly known as KDSA] is the major source of revenue to help fund all the vital and life-giving ministries that are provided through the ministry offices of the Diocesan Pastoral Staff, including the Office of the Bishop. Your generous gift makes possible more than 70 programs, ministries, and services that share Christ's Love throughout the diocese, the nation and the world with the goal of "*Growing in Faith, Living in Hope, and Giving in Love.*"

As I wrote in my pastoral letter, *What I Have Heard and Seen*:

"We are the Church, and we live out our faith, which comes to us through our baptism in the domestic churches of our homes, in our parish churches, in our membership in the diocesan church united with our sisters and brothers throughout the world as active members of the universal church." [page16]

The gifts bestowed by your participation in our diocesan Church have expanded God's work and enriched the lives of our communities and our Catholic faithful. This past year we *grew in faith* through innovative catechetical programs such as Sharing Christ and Discovering Christ offered by the office of Evangelization, Catechesis and Initiation. We *lived in hope* through the outreach to the homeless young adults through expanded Ark Services provided by Catholic Family Services. And we *gave in love* in our role as universal church through our diocesan contributions to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Holy See.

I realize that all of us continue to face challenges in these economic times as many people are experiencing hardship for the first time and others feel the effects even more gravely. I am very much aware of these difficulties; nevertheless I ask you to prayerfully consider the level of sacrificial giving to which you can commit. Please take a few moments to read the enclosed brochure to understand the full impact your gift will have on the work of the Church.

I would encourage all of us to enter into this year's Lenten journey ready to embrace all three pillars of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. During these 40 days of Lent let us carve out some additional prayer time, devote ourselves to the directives of fasting, and sacrifice some of our own worldly goods — all bringing us into solidarity with our brothers and sisters.

Our joy is abundant this year as we journey toward our celebration of the Risen Lord. As a faithful Catholic community we will mark a new chapter in our history with the celebration of our 40th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Kalamazoo this coming July. Together, we should be filled with joyful hope for all the blessings and gifts we've received and those yet to come. Please be assured of my daily prayers for you and your family, and I ask you to pray for me as well. I remain one with you

In Christ, the Good Shepherd

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley  
Bishop of Kalamazoo