



RENEW FAITH • BUILD COMMUNION • INSPIRE HOPE

April 2017

Jesus said to His disciples: *It was not you who chose Me; it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit. Your fruit must endure, so that all you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. The command I give you is this, that you love one another.* — John 15: 16-17

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we celebrate the joy of our Risen Lord during this Easter season, and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the great Feast of Pentecost, we are very mindful of God's love for us and His call to each of us to grow in holiness and to strengthen our relationship with Him. During these Easter days, each of us as baptized disciples of Jesus are called to proclaim the Gospel as Jesus encouraged His disciples to love one another.

This year the theme for the *Bishop's Annual Appeal*, "*We are called... to live in faith, hope and charity,*" echoes Jesus' words to us, His chosen people, on how to bear "fruit that will endure." Your generous financial support makes possible the many ministries, services and pastoral programs which help build God's kingdom. The funds raised enable us to "*live in faith*" through the recruitment, education and formational programs for diocesan seminarians who one day will be ordained as priests. We "*live in hope*" by strengthening our faith through adult faith formation programs such as the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (LEMI), marriage preparation programs, professional development workshops for our educators, support of our Immigration Assistance Program and our ministry to the growing number of Spanish-speaking Catholics throughout our Diocese. Finally, the *Bishop's Annual Appeal* also helps us to "*live in charity*" as we reach out to those in need through the support of the various programs and agencies of Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo as well as the Catholic Community Center in Benton Harbor.

As we reflect on our call to holiness, our call to be Jesus' disciples, our call to change the world, I invite you to reflect on the many ways your participation in the *Bishop's Annual Appeal* can help to strengthen and make even more vital the good works of the Church in southwest Michigan.

With gratitude for your thoughtful consideration and with hope for as generous response as you find possible, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ *Paul J. Bradley*

Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo