



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## DIOCESE HOSTS 800 PASTORAL MUSICIANS FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., July 17, 2006 – The Diocese of Grand Rapids is hosting **800 musicians** attending the **National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) Regional Convention, at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, July 18 – July 21.** Along with pastoral musicians, registrants include clergy, liturgists and other leaders of worship from throughout the United States and Canada. Bishop Walter A. Hurley, bishop of Grand Rapids, will welcome the guests at the 2:00 p.m. opening event on Tuesday, July 18.

"Those who lead music at liturgy are ministers in the purest form of the word, for they help us encounter God," said Father Chris Rouech, conference co-chair and pastor of St. James Parish, White Lake Area and St. John the Baptist Mission, Claybanks. "We are pleased that Grand Rapids is hosting an event that helps them be renewed and grow in their service to God's people."

The four-day conference offers workshops that address the multifaceted role of a pastoral musician. There are workshops on Catholic ritual, music for liturgies, Gregorian chant, and hand bells to name a few. Some workshops offer advice on working with youth choirs as well as basic time management techniques. Building bridges between cultures, people, and generations through music and prayer is a key focus of the conference.

"When you think about all the skills demanded of church musicians, it's incredible," Rouech said. "Besides all that's demanded of a musician, they need to be aware of the intricacies of Catholic liturgy, have familiarity with scripture, and have the temperament to work with the array of personalities that make up your typical parish."

The NPM has a membership of 9,000 persons. The regional convention is a bi-annual event. Registration is required.

Media interested in attending any of the following events are invited to do so by contacting Mary Haarman or Michelle Ogren, director of worship for the Diocese of Grand Rapids, at 616-648-2820.

<b>Opening Event</b>	<b>July 18, Tuesday, 2:00 pm, Amway Ballroom</b>
<b>Mass</b>	<b>July 19, Wednesday, 8:00 pm, Cathedral of Saint Andrew</b> <b>Bishop Walter A. Hurley, presiding</b>
<b>Ecumenical Prayer Service</b>	<b>July 20, Thursday, 5:00 pm</b> <b>LaGrave Ave. Christian Reformed Church, 107 LaGrave SE</b> <b>Calvin College Alumni Choir</b>