



...omed at St. Paul the Apostle Church and School in Grand Rapids where he
er, pastor of St. Paul Parish, and later visited with school students and staff.

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y dear friends,

With this issue of *FAITH Grand Rapids* magazine we begin our fourth year of publication.

I am grateful for the support this effort has received and for the many kind comments I hear upon visiting the parishes in our diocese. Many of us who are older may recall that years ago there were usually any number of Catholic newspapers and magazines that came into our homes. For a variety of reasons most have ceased publication (including our own *Western Michigan Catholic*) and in many homes there is no Catholic literature available or being received. In addition on a given Sunday approximately 25-30% of our Catholic people participate in Sunday Mass. Therefore, I have asked that parishes send *FAITH* magazine to all parishioners (even and perhaps especially) to those who do not attend or participate in parish life. I believe it is a small but necessary way for us to stay connected. We always have a responsibility to reach out to those who have fallen away or may not participate in Sunday Mass for a variety of reasons. I have heard that our homebound are especially appreciative of receiving it. We have a responsibility, and a serious one, to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. I know that many pass on their copy of *FAITH* magazine to friends and relatives. I am most grateful to our pastors and parishes, the staff of writers and editors for providing this necessary service to the people of the church in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

TV Mass: Another outreach here in the diocese is our 10:00 a.m. Sunday Mass broadcast live from the Cathedral of Saint Andrew. For over 50 years this Mass, one of the first in the country, has been broadcast. In earlier years the broadcast time for this Mass was provided at no cost as a public service to the diocese but things change and for many years now we have had to purchase time for the Mass. For many who because of illness and/or poor health are unable to attend Mass, this is a tremendous service which is valued very much if the letters I receive are any indication. This past year we installed new digital cameras in the cathedral to upgrade the quality of our productions. It was a special blessing this year to have had our Christmas Midnight Mass broadcast live from the cathedral. The cost of broadcasting the Sunday Mass from the cathedral is afforded by our annual Catholic Services Appeal. In addition we receive donations from a number of viewers. I am grateful for that support and I know that the people who watch the TV Mass are as well.

Respect for Life: January 22nd marks the date of the *Roe v. Wade* decision of the United States Supreme Court that opened the doors to legalized abortion and a continued disregard for human life in all its forms. This year, as in the past, the Diocese of Grand Rapids will be well represented in the Annual March in Washington to stand up for Life. This march is a reminder to us all of our deepest convictions that not everything that is legal is moral and right. At the time that I write this it is not clear what the final disposition on the Health Care Reform legislation will be. As you may be well aware the position of the Bishops of the United States in reflecting universal Church teaching is simply that all human life from conception to natural death is sacred and is to be supported and respected. No legislation will change that reality of our belief. "The anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* is observed in all dioceses of the United States as a particular day of penance for violation of the dignity of the human person through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the legal right to life." (Order of Prayer). In union with the church throughout our country I ask that in all parishes and institutions in the diocese a spirit of prayer and penance be observed for these intentions on January 22.

The past year has been difficult for so many with unemployment and economic uncertainty, immigration issues as well as the usual concerns that we all have. As we begin this New Year, it is my prayer for all of you that you will know peace and happiness and continue to experience God's many blessings. During the coming year I plan on continuing to visit our parishes and schools as I have done in the past. It is a special blessing for me to be with you in prayer as together we strive to serve the Lord and to "Serve with gladness."

With best wishes,

Bishop Walter A. Hurley