



The deaneries of Grand Haven, Big Rapids and the Northwest Lakeshore have reached the half-way mark in the planning process for their respective areas. Each deanery has identified a coordinating committee to oversee this process. These committees are comprised of lay leaders, pastors and school principals from among the 46 parishes who will continue to meet through the winter months.

In fall 2009, each of the three deaneries held two planning meetings during which members shared their vision of church, identified challenges, evaluated data, and discussed pastoral priorities. The third and fourth meetings in the series commence in January. At that time committee members will begin to identify recommendations based on feedback and data analysis.

During the three year planning process of *Our Faith, Our Future*, pastors, lay leadership and school principals from every deanery will participate and be given the opportunity to share the strengths and challenges unique to their areas. Following this diocesan-wide process of consultation and feedback, a plan will be proposed to the bishop for his consideration and approval.

The document outlining the objectives and steps for *Our Faith, Our Future: A Plan for the Diocese of Grand Rapids* is available online at dioceseofgrandrapids.org



>> Workmen recently re-installed a refurbished cross atop the steeple of St. Mary in downtown Grand Rapids. St. Mary Church, which was built in 1873, is in the midst of a major restoration project that includes renovation work on the roof, bell tower, exterior walls and stonework. To learn more about the project, or donate, visit stmarygr.org/restorationfund.htm.

Catholic Education Matters... *"Where separating faith and education is not an option"*

>> Diocesan schools will commemorate Catholic Schools Week (CSW), Jan. 31-Feb. 6, with a variety of events and activities. On Tuesday, Feb. 2, Bishop Hurley will celebrate Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew. More than 800 students, representing schools from throughout the diocese, are planning to attend. In cooperation with Catholic Charities West Michigan, student donations collected in the schools will be brought to Mass and given to Casa de la Paz emergency shelter, a refuge for homeless women and their children.

A joint project of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Catholic Schools Week celebrates education that extends beyond preparation for a secular life to education that prepares students for a Christian life. Catholic Schools Week recognizes the educational excellence provided by the nation's 7,800 Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Nearly 2.4 million students attend Catholic schools in the United States.

For more information, visit dioceseofgrandrapids.org.

