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**DIOCESE *of* GAYLORD**

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## APPOINTMENTS

### DECEMBER 14, 2020

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following appointments:

**Rev. Michael Conner** is granted Senior Priest status, effective January 1, 2021. We are grateful for Fr. Conner's 35 years of priestly ministry in various parishes and service as regional vicar over the years.

**Rev. James Siler** is appointed as Administrator of St. Augustine, Hillman and Jesus the Good Shepherd, Atlanta, effective January 14, 2021.

**Rev. Peter Wigton** is appointed as Administrator of Holy Cross, Beaver Island, in addition to his ministry as Pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption, Charlevoix, effective January 14, 2021.

Additionally, Rev. Anthony Citro has asked to withdraw from his assignment as Director of Seminarians. Rev. James Hayden, having previously served in this position, will serve as the Director of Seminarians on an interim basis, in addition to his assignment as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia.

### DECEMBER 11, 2020

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following appointments:

**Rev. Basil Lek** is appointed along with Rev. Zeljko J. Guberovic to serve *in solidum* (cfr. CIC can. 517, 1) the parish of Divine Mercy, Manistee, effective December 15, 2020.

**Rev. Kenneth Stachnik** was appointed Pastor of St. Philip Neri, Empire and St. Rita-St. Joseph, Maple City, effective November 28, 2020.

**Rev. Michael Verschaeve**, a retired priest and long-time pastor from the Archdiocese of Detroit, is appointed Sacramental Minister of St. Mary of the Woods, Kalkaska and St. Aloysius, Fife Lake, effective January 2, 2021.

### NOVEMBER 20, 2020

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following appointments:

**Rev. Anthony J. Cureton** is appointed full time Sacramental Minister to the parishes of St. James, Whittemore; St. Pius X, Hale; and St. Stephen, Skidway Lake. Father Cureton has been serving as Parochial Vicar at St. Philip Neri, Empire and St. Rita-St. Joseph, Maple City. This appointment is effective December 11, 2020.

**Rev. Pablo Martinez**, a member of the Neo-Catechumenal Way and priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, will complete his service in the Diocese of Gaylord on December 1, 2020. Father Martinez has been serving as the Parochial Vicar at Divine Mercy, Manistee and providing leadership in the ministry to the Hispanic community. We are grateful for his years of service.

**Mr. Robert Bowersox** is appointed Director of Parish Life (otherwise known as Pastoral Administrator) of St. Mary of the Woods, Kalkaska and St. Aloysius, Fife Lake. This appointment is effective immediately.

## **OCTOBER 29, 2020**

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following change in the Office of Vocations.

"The promotion of vocations to the priesthood is not a one person responsibility, but the responsibility of us all, priests and Christian faithful. We must continue to try to create a culture of vocations in the diocese and encourage suitable and worthy candidates to begin and follow through with a discernment process leading to future ordinations.

"This message is to let you know that I have appointed Father Anthony Citro as Director of Seminarians and Priestly Vocations for the Diocese of Gaylord. This appointment, effective November 1, 2020, is in addition to his ministry as Pastor of Immaculate Conception, Traverse City.

"I anticipate Father Citro will assemble a small group of priests and others to work closely with him and the bishop in this important ministry. I am grateful to him for his willingness to undertake this responsibility to coordinate our vocation efforts.

"I also want to thank Father Ben Rexroat and Father Chris Jarvis for their leadership and for their assistance in this transition."

Bishop Hurley invites all to pray daily for vocations to the priesthood, sharing "Our need is real. Please include petitions for this intention in the Intercessory Prayers of the Faithful."

## **OCTOBER 19, 2020**

Bishop Walter Hurley, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following appointments, effective October 17, 2020:

**Deacon Frederick A. Hackl** is appointed to diaconal ministry at Holy Childhood of Jesus Parish, Harbor Springs. He will serve under the direction of Rev. James Bearss, Pastor of Holy Childhood of Jesus Parish.

**Deacon Robert H. Richardson** is appointed to diaconal ministry at Immaculate Conception Parish, Traverse City. He will serve under the direction of Rev. Anthony Citro, Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish.

**Deacon Michael P. Roy** is appointed to diaconal ministry at All Saints Parish, Alpena. He will serve under the direction of Rev. Joseph Muszkiewicz, Pastor of All Saints Parish.

**Deacon Timothy L. Webb** is appointed to diaconal ministry at St. Mary Parish, Hannah. He will serve under the direction of Rev. Eyob Merin, Administrator of St. Mary Parish.

## SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following appointments, effective October 1, 2020:

**Rev. James Hayden** is appointed Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Gaylord.

**Ms. Julie Erhardt** is appointed Chancellor of the Diocese of Gaylord with additional responsibility for Child Protection programming and issues relating to parish incorporation.

## AUGUST 31, 2020

Bishop Walter Hurley, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the following appointments:

**Rev. Wayne Dziekan** is appointed to full time Hispanic Ministry/Advocacy while continuing as sacramental minister at St. Helen Parish, St. Helen, as well as to the Hispanic Community. He is relieved of his assignment as Director of the Secretariat for Peace and Justice. This appointment is effective August 26, 2020.

**Rev. Matthew Furgiuele** is appointed Administrator of St. Joseph Parish in East Jordan as well as continuing work with the Diocesan Tribunal and as Assistant Chancellor with responsibilities for Diocesan Archives. This appointment is effective September 2, 2020.

**Deacon Brent Hemker** is appointed Administrator of St. James Parish, Whittemore; St. Stephen Parish, Skidway Lake; and St. Pius X Parish, Hale, effective immediately.

**Rev. Elias Chinzara** is appointed temporary Sacramental Minister at St. James Parish, Whittemore; St. Stephen Parish, Skidway Lake; and St. Pius X Parish, Hale until other arrangements are made. This appointment is effective immediately. Father Chinzara will receive a future assignment in discussion with the Bishop of Mutare, his diocese of incardination.

## JUNE 15, 2020

The following clergy appointments will be effective July 1, 2020, unless otherwise noted. Please keep all involved in your continued prayers.

### **Pastor Emeritus:**

**Reverend Robert Bissot**, from Pastor St Anne, Harrisville; St Catherine, Ossineke; St Gabriel, Black River; and St Raphael, Mikado to Pastor Emeritus, with residence at St Anne, Harrisville. Effective June 15, 2020.

### **Administrator Reverend:**

**Tyler Bischoff**, from Parochial Vicar of Holy Family, East Tawas and Sacred Heart, Oscoda to Administrator of St Catherine, Ossineke; St Gabriel, Black River; St Anne, Harrisville; and St. Raphael, Mikado. Effective June 15, 2020.

**Parochial Vicars:**

**Reverend Benjamin Martin**, from the Faculty at St Francis High School, Traverse City to Parochial Vicar of Immaculate Conception, Traverse City.

**Reverend Innocent Zambua**, from Parochial Vicar of St Mary of the Assumption, Charlevoix and St. Joseph, East Jordan to Parochial Vicar of Holy Family, East Tawas and Sacred Heart, Oscoda.

**Chaplaincies and In Residence:**

**Reverend Christopher Henderson**, concluding his term as chaplain of the Carmelite Monastery of the Infant Jesus of Prague, Traverse City and returning to the Fathers of Mercy Congregation of Priests, Auburn, Kentucky.

**Reverend Phillip Johnson**, from the Diocese of Raleigh (North Carolina) to serve as chaplain of the Carmelite Monastery of the Infant Jesus of Prague, Traverse City.

**Reverend Josephat Okafor**, from the Diocese of Awka (Nigeria) to be in residence at Holy Family, East Tawas and Sacred Heart, Oscoda.  
Effective as of June 3, 2020.

**Priestly Ministry Outside the Diocese of Gaylord:**

**Reverend Matthew Cowan**, by mutual agreement, released for priestly ministry in the Diocese of Salina (Kansas) beginning on June 15, 2020 for a triennium.

**Reverend Bradley Nursey**, from Parochial Vicar of Holy Rosary, Cedar released for religious life discernment at the Charterhouse of the Transfiguration Carthusian Monastery, Arlington, Vermont.  
Effective summer 2020.

**MAY 4, 2020**

Bishop Steven J Raica announces the following appointments effective July 1, 2020 unless otherwise noted.

**Reverend Raymond Cotter** – from Pastor of Christ the King Parish, Acme to senior priest status.

**Reverend Chris Jarvis** – from parochial vicar of St Ann, Cadillac; St Stephen, Lake City; St Theresa, Manton; St Edward, Harietta, to administrator of Christ the King, Acme. Fr Jarvis will continue as Assistant Vocation Director for the Diocese of Gaylord.

**Deacon Alex Kowalkowski** – upon his ordination to the Priesthood on June 20, 2020, will be assigned as Parochial Vicar of St Ann, Cadillac; St Stephen, Lake City; St Theresa, Manton; St Edward, Harietta.

**Mr. Michael Lingaur** - upon his ordination to the Diaconate on June 20, 2020, will provide pastoral service as Deacon at St Joseph (Mapleton), Traverse City before returning to studies at Mundelein Seminary near Chicago, IL in the fall.

Please keep all involved in your prayers; God bless!

## DEATH NOTICES

Click on the names below to view full obituary.

[Father Albert Langheim, O.F.M.](#)

[Father Norman "Norm" Dickson](#)

[Sister Marie Benedict](#)

[Sister Lydia Korson](#)

[Sister Mary Katherine Murphy](#)

[Father Robert H. Bissot](#)

[Sister Mary Ellen Paulson](#)

[Father Andrew 'Andy' Buvala](#)

[Father Joseph Reitz](#)

## The Passing of Father Albert Langheim, O.F.M.

12/10/2020



On December 6, 2020, Fr. Albert "Al" Langheim, OFM entered into eternal life. Fr. Al served as Administrator, then Sacramental Minister, at the parishes of Holy Cross, Cross Village; St. Ignatius, Good Hart; and St. Nicholas, Larks Lake.

Later, Fr. Al also assisted at Cross in the Woods, Indian River. His obituary and funeral arrangements can be found below:

**Father Albert Langheim, O.F.M. Virden, Illinois**

**April 9, 1927 - December 6, 2020**

Father Al was born in Girard, IL April 9, 1927 to Henry and Elizabeth (Sommer) Langheim. He was one of ten boys and is survived by a brother, Bernard (and Patricia) Langheim of Salem, VA and his sister-in-law, Peggy Langheim of Virden, IL and several nieces and nephews. Fr. Al was preceded in death by his mother and father, and brothers Lawrence, Harold, Ernest, Henry, Aloysius, Paul, Francis and Norman.

Fr. Al joined the Franciscans in 1948 and was ordained in 1955 and celebrated his first Mass in Virden. Following that he earned a MA in Counseling and Certification as a Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor. He worked in the area of psychological counseling and in hospital chaplaincy for over twenty years and a number of those years he helped with the formation of many young men pursuing vocations to religious life and the priesthood. He was one of pioneers in integrating theological studies with the behavioral sciences and an early leader in the establishment the National Association of Catholic Chaplains.

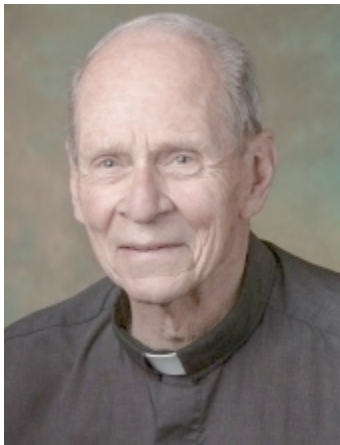
One of his proudest achievements was the founding of The Museum of L'Arbre Croche History in 1995. It is located on the grounds of the church Fr. Al pastored in Cross Village, Michigan. It is filled with artifacts and resource material of local Native Americans and the earlier explorers and settlers of northern Michigan.

There will visitation at Sacred Heart Church in Virden beginning at 10:00 AM, Saturday December 12. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11:00 AM. Donations can be made to the Retirement Fund for the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, 3140 Meramec St., St. Louis, MO 63118.

The Airsman-Calvert Funeral Home in Virden is in charge of arrangements. Condolences may be left online at [www.airsmancalvert.com](http://www.airsmancalvert.com). With COVID restrictions in place online tributes are very much appreciated.

## Passing of Fr. Norman "Norm" Dickson

11/28/2020



On November 24, 2020, Reverend Norman Dickson entered into eternal life.

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, states, *"It is with deep sadness that I share the news of Fr. Dickson's passing. We are thankful for his tremendous work and many sacrifices for the Body of Christ here in this life, and we are comforted in knowing that he is now entering his eternal home. Please join me in praying for Fr. Norm, his family, and all those who knew and loved him."*

Fr. Dickson's [obituary and details of funeral arrangements](#) can be found below:

**Reverend Norman "Norm" J. Dickson, S.J.**

**December 4, 1936 - November 24, 2020**

Let us pray in thanksgiving for the life of Fr. Norm.

Age 83. A Jesuit for over 65 years. He was born in Detroit, MI. He is the son of the late Charles and Antoinette (nee Heuser) Dickson. He is survived by a brother Robert, a sister Dorothy McDowell and many nieces and nephews. His sister Mary Lou Marker predeceased him. He died at Colombiere Center in Clarkston, MI.

Before entering the Jesuits, he graduated from the University of Detroit Jesuit High School (1954). Norm entered the Society of Jesus on September 1, 1954 at Milford, Ohio. He was ordained on July 29, 1967 in Frankfurt, Germany, and professed final vows on February 2, 1979 at Walsh Jesuit High School in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

While in the Society, Fr. Norm earned a Bachelor's Degree in Literature from Xavier University (1958) and a Master's Degree in Classics from Loyola University Chicago (1963). He studied Theology at Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany (1964-1968).

During regency, Norm taught Latin and Greek at St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland (1961-1964). After ordination, Fr. Norm spent 14 years at the recently established Walsh Jesuit High School in Cuyahoga Falls. At Walsh, he taught, was director of student social services, and president (1970-1975). When Fr. Norm was President at Walsh he reserved cutting the grass on the school's property to himself. He liked riding the tractor and the solitude it gave him. He would say that the seeming monotony of the job gave him a great chance to pray uninterrupted.

In 1982, Fr. Norm was missioned to help start Loyola Secondary School in Wau, South Sudan. While in Wau, he was director of mission at the school in addition to serving as superior of the Jesuit Community. The first 50 students arrived at Loyola in 1984. However, war and turmoil in South Sudan meant the school could only run for two years before closing and suspending admissions in 1985. Norm stayed in Wau until 1987 hoping that things would settle down and the school could reopen. [Unfortunately, the school was not able to reopen until 2006.] After a year sabbatical (at Walsh Jesuit) and a year as an assistant campus minister at the University of Detroit, Norm returned to Africa in 1989. He spent three years as the assistant rector and minister at Hekima College in Nairobi, Kenya.

Norm returned to the USA for good in 1992 when he was missioned to work in the Detroit Province Office. He was the vocation director for the Detroit Province (1992-1997) and the Provincial Assistant for International Ministries (1995-1997). Norm was pastor of Gesu Parish in Detroit (1997-2005). In 2007, Norm -- always available to be sent where the need was the greatest -- returned to the Detroit Province Office as treasurer of the province.

In 2009, Fr. Norm returned to his great love: parish ministry. He was the administrator of two parishes in Michigan: St Mary of the Woods Parish in Kalkaska and St Aloysius Parish in Fife Lake. He also did prison ministry in the area. Norm continued his administrator duties until, in October 2020, he had to get care for his cancer at Colombiere Center.



When Norm was in Kalkaska and Fife Lake, he asked folks what they thought the people would like. Several folks responded "a vegetable garden". He started one at St. Mary's and the people of the parish worked it with relish. Every autumn they would send several tons of fresh vegetables to local food pantries to distribute to the poor. Norm said that the garden did more to pull the people together than anything ever said from the pulpit, and gave them a chance to live the Gospel through feeding those most in need. He likewise loved to spend time relaxing each week at Villa Marquette in Omena, Michigan -- one of his favorite places in the world!

Norm was a marvelous storyteller who loved to regale people with his stories. When telling a seemingly outlandish story, there would always be a twinkle in his eyes and a smile on his lips.

Norm did his theology studies in Frankfurt in Germany and kept up his German by praying the Office in German each day. Upon his arrival there he dropped off his bags at the porteria in the care of a priest that he would later learn was his rector. He then went outside and got into a car with an attractive young lady to go on vacation for a week. It was his sister. His rector would retell this story for years saying, "this American came to the theologate, gave me his bags and then took off for a week with Miss America in this fancy car."

Norm was an avid athlete and loved playing softball and golf. He loved telling the story of the time that he and his team played The King and his Court; softball's equivalent of the Harlem Globetrotters. The King lost as infrequently as the Harlem Globetrotters, but Norm's team managed to eek out a win against these pros.

**Due to COVID-19 restrictions, attendance at the Vigil and Funeral Mass is private and can only be attended by members of the Colombiere community.**

- The Vigil will take place on Sunday, November 29 at 7 PM.
- The Funeral Mass will occur on Monday, November 30 at 10:45 AM.

These events will be livestreamed on Youtube. You can watch the Vigil Service and Funeral Mass live at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9TJEVaNcLIQmq5H37lepXQ/videos>

Condolences may be sent to his brother, Robert Dickson, 17486 Doris Lane, Livonia MI 48152 or his sister, Dorothy McDowell, 20070 Shoals Ct, Clinton Twp MI 48038.

Memorial gifts to support the Jesuits may be made to the USA Midwest Jesuits, 1010 N. Hooker St., Chicago, IL 60642.

## The Passing of Sister Marie Benedict

11/02/2020



SISTER MARIE BENEDICT O'TOOLE, OP

Entered eternal life on, October 25, 2020

at the age of 95

after 73 years of religious life

Evening Prayer with Remembering:

Wednesday, October 28, 7:00 p.m.

Dominican Chapel/Marywood

Mass of Christian Burial:

Thursday, October 29, 10:00 a.m.

Dominican Chapel/Marywood

We commend Sister Marie Benedict to your prayers.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

After gratitude for her Dominican vocation, Sister Marie Benedict O'Toole treasured most her long career of teaching small children. Even after her Golden Jubilee, she spent years tutoring youngsters at SS Peter and Paul School in Saginaw and elsewhere, and she loved every minute of it.

Coming into the world on October 11, 1925, Geraldine Ann O'Toole was the seventh of ten children born to Mary and Benedict O'Toole in Merrill, Michigan. She grew up on a farm which celebrated its 100 years of existence in 2000. Coming from a very religious family of six girls and four boys, she had an older sister who became a Franciscan Sister and a brother who was a diocesan priest, both of whom preceded her in death. Sister was always proud of her family and Irish roots.

Geraldine attended Sacred Heart Academy grade school and graduated from high school in Merrill in 1944. Her classmates testify to her love of a good time and to her taking part in many activities: cheerleading, swimming, playing soft ball, dancing, as well as working hard at her studies. After being employed two years at J.C. Penney's in Saginaw, she entered the congregation at Marywood on September 8, 1946. She was formally received upon the completion of her postulancy and received the name Sister Marie Benedict after her mother and father. Soon, she earned the affectionate nickname of Sr. Benny which fit her gentle disposition.

Continuing her college education after her profession of vows in March 1948, she received her BA and MA degrees from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids and another MA in Education from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Through the years, Sister expanded her educational experience by travels which took her to Europe, and then with her good friend Sister John Anne Paquette across the entire country.

Sister Marie Benedict's teaching career took her to schools throughout Michigan: St. Anne's, Alpena; Holy Rosary Academy and St. Boniface, Bay City; St. Alphonsus and Marywood, Grand Rapids, St. Joseph the Worker, Beal City; St. Joseph, Carrollton, where she was principal; St. Mary's School, St. Charles; Sacred Heart, Mt. Pleasant; St. Michael's, Pinconning; St. Mary's, Big Rapids; St. Charles, Greenville; St. Mary, Charlevoix; and SS. Peter and Paul, Saginaw. In 1988 Sister took a break from the classroom by serving as executive housekeeper at Marywood.

Sisters with whom she lived and worked on the missions speak of her competence and prayerfulness and of her readiness to help everyone who needed assistance. Throughout her life she bore the cross of a severe hearing impairment, but she never let that interfere with her teaching or her dedication to mission. Her Sister companions over the years speak of her cheerfulness and hard work, as well as of her ready cooperation in every project.

In January 2003 Sister Marie Benedict was inducted into the Saginaw Catholic Schools Hall of Fame in honor of her contributions to Catholic Education over the years. At the time she wrote: "My life as a Grand Rapids Dominican has been one of joy, life-giving, and full of challenges. There were times when I felt there were not enough hours in a day to do all that I needed to do. I have enjoyed each mission where I have served, the Sisters I lived with, the children, and the parents I worked with. Lots of changes have taken place in education and in community living throughout the years, but with prayer and the support of each other, we saw that everything worked out for the best."

"I marvel, as I look back over the past 55 years and view all that has transpired in every aspect of my life. God has seen us through good times and hard times and continues to be with us as we move forward on our journey together, seeking new ministries, creating new ways to evangelize and keeping God ever alive in our lives and hopefully in those we meet each day. I praise and thank God each day for the wonderful life that has been mine. And now, I thank all of you for what you have done for me and for the many blessings I have received. God bless each and everyone!"

Sister Benny's legacy of joy and happiness is summed up in her favorite song: "You are my sunshine." She was ours. Now she rests in the peace of God, the one she served with joy all of her days.

## Sister Lydia Korson

10/14/2020



**Korson, OP, Lydia of Grand Rapids (born Mary Lucille Korson in Suttons Bay, MI) died on October 12, 2020. She was 91 years old and a Dominican Sister for 71 years.**

After completing a BA at Aquinas College, Sr. Lydia's education was furthered by completing an MA in Elementary Education at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant. In Michigan, Sr. Lydia taught at St. Boniface, Bay City; St. Alphonsus, St. Thomas and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids; St. Mary's, Gaylord; Holy Rosary Academy, Bay City; St. Mary Magdalen, Melvindale, St. Simon, Ludington; St. Mary, Charlevoix, and Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools, Traverse City. In New Mexico, Sr. Lydia taught at Our Lady of Belen and St. Mary's, Belen; Our Lady of Fatima, Albuquerque. During many of these years she also served as principal, directed choirs, and produced musicals.

When Sister Lydia took over the principalship at St. Mary, Belen the school was about to close. She recruited certified and qualified staff and with the help of parishioners and volunteers improved the playground and its equipment as well as the interior and exterior of the school and the enrollment increased. By the time she left, the school was thriving again. Years later when Sister Lydia was preparing to leave the Ludington Area Catholic School, she received a mock-serious letter from the Sheriff of Mason County, ordering her to remain as principal and threatening serious consequences if she failed to comply, e.g., loss of friendly smiles, sadness among friends and acquaintances, etc. The summons continued, "All kidding aside, we certainly hope you will reconsider your decision to leave as we feel that you have done a tremendous job at the school and your absence would truly be a loss to the community." This was accompanied by a petition with 117 signatures urging her to remain. Sister Lydia stayed in Ludington for three more years. Sr. Lydia's philosophy of education can be summed up in her own words: "The goal of preparing students spiritually, academically, physically and socially is truly a team effort and is accomplished by a caring and dedicated staff who recognize and respond to the individual needs of students."

Sr. Lydia is survived by her sisters Sister David Therese Korson (her twin) and Sister Peter Mary Korson of Grand Rapids, MI; Agnes Donner of Sparta, MI; Christine Gibson (Thomas) of Traverse City, MI; her brothers John Korson of Lake Leelanau, MI; Jerome Korson of Gills Pier, MI; nieces, nephews; many friends and members of her Dominican Community. In an effort to protect our vulnerable population from the Covid-19 virus a private Funeral Mass will be celebrated at Dominican Chapel/Marywood on Thursday, October 15. Burial will be at Resurrection Cemetery. Memorials in Sister Lydia Korson's name may be made to the Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters.

## Sister Mary Katherine Murphy

10/12/2020



**SISTER MARY KATHERINE MURPHY, RSM**  
**SISTER OF MERCY FOR SEVENTY-FOUR YEARS**  
**TEACHER, PARISH PASTORAL MINISTER**  
**March 8, 1930 – October 4, 2020**

Sister Mary Katherine Murphy died peacefully on Oct. 4, 2020 surrounded by her Sisters of Mercy following a long illness.

Mary Katherine was born in Detroit to Dan and Mae (Henry) Murphy on March 8, 1930. Her loving parents gave their only child a firm foundation in Irish Catholic faith and were both honored and sad when she told them of her vocation to religious life as she was only fifteen years old. Nonetheless, they supported her, and she joined the Sisters of Mercy on September 7, 1946.

She became a novice a year later, received the name, Sister Mary Brendan, completed her high school education and was prepared for life as a Sister of Mercy. She professed her perpetual vows on August 16, 1952 after further education and active ministry as a teacher.

Sister Mary Brendan taught primary grade children for thirty-one years in Michigan: Berkley, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Ludington, Lansing, Manistee and Hazel Park. Those years included First Communion preparation as well as classroom instruction. During that time, she earned a master's degree in reading at Cardinal Stritch College and attended numerous workshops to maintain and improve her teaching skills. During those post-Vatican II days, she also returned to her baptismal name. She loved her ministry but knew she would benefit from some time to reflect on possible new directions.

A 1980 sabbatical year in Spokane proved to be a turning point for a ministry change and thus she became part of the staff at St. Francis Parish in Traverse City. She spent the next thirty-four years there and was active in every aspect of parish life. She especially enjoyed her work with the elderly, with those who were poor and/or lonely. She managed a food and clothing service and helped direct the RCIA program for persons who wished to join the Catholic church. She also worked with young altar servers and made sure they understood their roles, often attending all of the weekend Masses to be sure they did. The St. Francis football team could count on her presence for every home game where she and her dog had their own special observation post. Katherine had no immediate family members and so the parish families were in fact her family. When she left Traverse City they kept in contact with her, often stopping to see her or send her flowers.

Sister Katherine is warmly remembered for her strong Irish spirit and nurtured it through several trips to her father's hometown in Ireland. She enjoyed traveling whenever possible and in her semi-retirement years often spent several winter months in Florida with friends. Her many years in Traverse City could have isolated her from the Community as there were no other Sisters of Mercy there while she was at St. Francis Parish. She, however, rarely missed a Community meeting and maintained an active interest in whatever was happening in the Community. She will be missed for her quick Irish wit, for her devotion to prayer and her warm welcoming of all who stopped to visit her.

### Funeral arrangements

Friday, Oct. 16, 2020

- 10:00 am: Memorial Service Sacred Heart Chapel, Farmington Hills, MI. Residents only. Memorial Service will be available on Zoom. When it is time to join the service, [click here](#) or see below.
- 11:00 - Burial at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. Arrive inside the front gate at 10 Mile and Beech Daly. Cars will be led to gravesite. Please wear a mask and observe social distancing.

## The Passing of Rev. Robert H. Bissot

09/21/2020



Reverend Robert H. Bissot, Senior Priest in the Diocese of Gaylord, entered into eternal life on September 18, 2020. Ordained a priest in the Diocese of Grand Rapids in 1957, Fr. Bissot became a priest of the Diocese of Gaylord at the time of its formation in 1971, where he has faithfully served since.

“Fr. Bissot was a beloved pastor, teacher and friend to so many, and while it is with deep sadness that I share the news of his passing, we can rejoice together knowing that he is now in his eternal home with our Lord,” said Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord. “I’m profoundly grateful for Fr. Bissot’s faithfulness to the vocation he served so well, and for his many years of ministry and tireless example of selfless service — his work with students and adults alike has touched countless lives. Please join me in praying for Fr. Bissot, and for his family, as we reflect in thanksgiving on his earthly ministry and his entrance into the heavenly banquet.”

Fr. Bissot's obituary and details of funeral arrangements can be found below:

### Reverend Robert Henry Bissot

#### 1932-2020

Reverend Robert Henry Bissot entered into eternal life on September 18, 2020, at the age of 88. He was born April 25, 1932 in Grand Rapids to Bertha and Carl H. Bissot. Fr. Bissot attended St. Mary’s School and St. Joseph’s Seminary in Grand Rapids; Michigan State University in Lansing; the Seminary of Philosophy in Montreal; and the Pontifical North American College/Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained on December 15, 1957, at the Immaculate Conception Chapel, North American College, in Rome by the Most Reverend Martin J. O’Connor.

Fr. Bissot’s assignments included Assistant Pastor at St. Andrew’s Cathedral, Grand Rapids; Assistant Pastor at St. Francis, Traverse City; faculty at St. Joseph Seminary, Grand Rapids; Assistant Principal at Catholic Central High School, Grand Rapids; Administrator, pro tem, at St. Joseph, Wright; Pastor of St. Mary, Hannah and faculty at St. Francis High School, Traverse City; in care of St. Joseph the Worker Mission, Karlin; Acting Associate Superintendent of Christian Education, Diocese of Gaylord; Superintendent of Christian Education, Manistee Area, and Associate Superintendent of Christian Education, Diocese of Gaylord; Administrator of Holy Family, Klacking Creek; Pastor of St. Ann, Frankfort; Pastor of St. Bernard, Alpena; the Director of Vocations, Director of Seminarians and Deacon Director for the Diocese of Gaylord; Pastor of St. Ann, Cadillac and Pastor of St. Edward, Harrietta; Vicar of the Southwest Region; appointment to the College of Consultors; Pastor of St. Joseph, West Branch; Vicar of the Prudenville Vicariate; Diocesan Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Pontifical Association of the Holy Child; and Pastor of St. Catherine, Ossineke, St. Gabriel, Black River, St. Anne, Harrisville, and St. Raphael, Mikado. In June 2020, Fr. Bissot was assigned Senior Priest status with residence at St. Anne in Harrisville.

Fr. Bissot is survived by his sister, Carolyn Jeanne Butler (William, deceased); nine nieces and nephews; as well as many other loving family members, friends, and parishioners.

Fr. Bissot was preceded in death by his parents, Bertha and Carl H. Bissot; sister, Barbara Ann Bissot; brother, Thomas Charles (Virginia) Bissot; niece, Susan Joan Bissot.

Visitation will be held from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at St. Anne church in Harrisville on Tuesday, September 29, 2020, with a vigil service held at 7:00 p.m. with Fr. James Bearss presiding.

Visitation will also be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Gaylord on Wednesday, September 30, 2020. A Funeral Mass will follow, to be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. with Bishop Walter A. Hurley presiding. The Funeral Mass will also be available by livestream at [www.dioceseofgaylord.org](http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org).

Interment will take place at Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Grand Rapids, Michigan on Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

If you wish to send a note of condolence to the family of Fr. Bissot, it may be sent to the following:

*The Family of Rev. Robert Henry Bissot*

*c/o Gillies Funeral Home*

*104 West Alger Street, Lincoln, Michigan 48742*

Gifts made in honor of Fr. Bissot can be made out to The Society of the Propagation of the Faith.

## The Passing of Sister Mary Ellen Paulson

08/21/2020

Sister Mary Ellen Paulson, O.P., 92, passed away in Racine, WI on Aug 17, 2020. Sister Mary Ellen spent many years in service to others as a teacher and principal, and from 1974-1978 she served as the Assistant Superintendent of Schools here in the Diocese of Gaylord.

Our Catholic schools are richer for the efforts of those who selflessly serve our students and families, and we are thankful for Sister Mary Ellen's help in developing our schools into strong institutions of superior academics and profound faith. The direction she provided during her time presiding as Assistant Superintendent was undoubtedly invaluable in the growth and development of our Catholic schools in those early years of our diocese. We are thankful for her and her service, and pray for her together:

*"Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord.*

*And let perpetual light shine upon her.*

*May she rest in peace."*



## The Passing of Father Andrew 'Andy' Buvala

03/31/2020



Fr. Andrew (Andy) Buvala, O.F.M., a Franciscan friar of the Sacred Heart Province, died on Sunday, March 29, 2020, at St. Mary's Home at the Felician Village in Manitowoc, WI, at the age of 98. From 1981 to 2013, he lived and ministered in the Gaylord Diocese of northern Michigan facilitating ministry to the Native American community for the diocese as well as pastor of the Immaculate Conception Mission which became St. Kateri Tekakwitha Church in Peshawbestown, MI. In 2013, Fr. Andy, at the age of 92, moved to Blessed Giles Friary in Manitowoc, WI. Shortly before his 98th birthday, he moved to St. Mary's Nursing Home at the Felician Village.

Due to the coronavirus, there will be a private Funeral Mass at Blessed Giles Friary on Friday, April 3rd. Family, friars, and friends will gather at a later date, to be determined, for a Funeral Mass at St. John the Baptist Church in Joliet, IL. Fr. Andy's remains will be buried with his brother, Fr. Medard Buvala, O.F.M., at St. John's Cemetery, following the Mass.

May the angels lead him home.

## The Passing of Father Joseph Reitz

01/07/2020

### Reverend Joseph Anthony Reitz

December 25, 1927 – January 5, 2020

Reverend Joseph Anthony Reitz entered eternal life on January 5, 2020 at the age of 92. Reverend Reitz, the fourth child of Anthony and Edith Daller Reitz was born on Sunday, December 25, 1927. Father Reitz prepared for the priesthood with six years at St. Joseph Seminary in Grand Rapids, two years at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit and four years at St. John Provincial Seminary in Plymouth. He was ordained by the Most Reverend Joseph Rancans on June 6, 1953 at St. Andrew Cathedral in Grand Rapids.

Father Reitz served in many parishes including twice at St. Mary in Muskegon. Other parishes in which he served included St. Rose of Lima in Hastings, St. Francis in Muskegon. He served as Pastor at St. Bernard in Irons, Mission Church of St. Ignatius in Luther, Our Lady of the Lake in Prudenville, and St. Stephen and St. Theresa in Lake City and Manton, respectively. In addition, from 1958 to 1961, he served as a professor and athletic director at Muskegon Catholic Central and was one of the original founders and board members of Manistee Catholic Central. In 1985, Father Reitz was appointed Chaplain of Knights of Columbus, Our Lady of Good Council #8556. He retired to the status of Senior Priest and moved back to his family home in June of 1993.

As his retirement years progressed, Father Reitz worked with The Trinitarians of Mary, who helped keep up the farm, provided personal care for both, Fr. Reitz and his brother, Fr. Bill, and provided spiritual solace to others in the area. Special thanks are due to his friends Jim and Jerry, who, for many years provided immense help managing Fr. Joe's health care and financial matters.

Bishop Steven J. Raica commented, "When thinking of Father Reitz, one cannot help but think of him as a dedicated servant of God and a faithful priest who loved the Blessed Mother. Father Reitz wanted so much for those he served to know they were loved by God. This often led him to speak with humor and a fair dose of candor."

Father Joseph Reitz was preceded in death by his parents and three siblings, Father William Reitz, Virginia Reitz and Margaret (Howard) Scheid. Immediate survivors include Margaret's six children, Mary Jo (Kenneth) Cusack, Barbara (Barry) Trierweiler, John (Daniel Snyder) Scheid, Joseph (Marybeth) Scheid, Jeanette (Cindy) Scheid, and Daniel (Kate) Scheid.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 11:00 AM Thursday, January 9, 2020 at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Belding with Bishop Steven J. Raica as principal celebrant. Committal prayers will follow at St. Mary's Miriam Cemetery, Belding. Visitation will be Wednesday January 8, 2020, 6-8 pm with a Rosary at 8:00 pm at Johnson-Feuerstein Funeral Home, 203 Pleasant St., Belding, MI 48809. In lieu of flowers, donations to Emmanuel Hospice or St. Ann's Home of Grand Rapids may be sent to Johnson-Feuerstein Funeral Home of Belding, MI.

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December 18, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Peace be with you!

In these Advent days of preparation for the coming of our Lord, we hope and pray that the Prince of Peace may console you and draw you to himself. Over this past year the struggles with the global COVID-19 pandemic have weighed heavily on our hearts, yet our Lord has been with us to deepen our faith and trust in him. Know of our prayers for you and for all health care workers who are so diligently caring for those who are ill.

As vaccines for COVID-19 are now becoming available, we wish to address the moral questions that have arisen, insofar as some vaccines are developed using cells lines that have originated from the tissue taken from babies who were aborted decades ago.<sup>1</sup> Abortion is a grave evil, and we must avoid complicity in abortion. Let us also pray for God's peace, healing, and mercy for all those who have had abortions.

At the time of this writing, the Food and Drug Administration has given approval for the emergency use of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer. Two other vaccines, one developed by Moderna and the other developed by AstraZeneca, might also gain FDA approval.<sup>2</sup>

It is morally permissible to receive the vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna. Neither of these vaccines have used cell lines originating in tissue taken from aborted babies in their design, development, and production. However, both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccine did use such a cell line in the confirmatory testing. This connection to the abortion is very remote, however, and it is important to keep in mind that there are varying levels of responsibility. Greater moral responsibility lies with the researchers than with those who receive the vaccine. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has indicated that it is morally permissible to be vaccinated if there are no alternatives and there are serious health risks.<sup>3</sup> Such serious health risks are present due to the current pandemic.

The vaccine developed by AstraZeneca is more morally problematic, however. It did utilize in the design, production, development, and confirmatory testing a cell line that originated from tissue taken from an aborted baby. This vaccine may be received only if there are no other alternatives. If one does not have a choice of vaccine and a delay in immunization may bring about serious consequences for one's health and the health of others, it would be permissible to accept the AstraZeneca vaccine. It is somewhat similar in production to the Rubella vaccine, which the Pontifical Academy of Life indicated could be received for grave reasons and if there are no other alternatives.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more on the morality of COVID-19 vaccines, see the joint statement of the chairmen of the USCCB Committee on Doctrine and Pro-Life Activities on which our statement is based: [moral-considerations-covid-vaccines \(usccb.org\)](https://www.usccb.org/statement-usccb-chairmen-covid-19-vaccines)

<sup>2</sup> For more information about specific vaccines being developed for COVID-19 see this reference chart from the Charlotte Lozier Institute: [COVID-19-Vaccine-Candidates-and-Abortion-Derived-Cell-Lines.pdf \(lozierinstitute.org\)](https://lozierinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Vaccine-Candidates-and-Abortion-Derived-Cell-Lines.pdf)

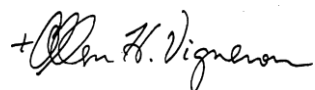
<sup>3</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions (Dignitas Personae) (2008), nos. 35-36: [Instruction Dignitas Personae on Certain Bioethical Questions, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith \(vatican.va\)](https://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/addresses/2008/08/20080806_ia_35-36_en.html)

<sup>4</sup> Pontifical Academy for Life, "Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Foetuses," (9 June 2005) in National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly 6:3 (2006): 541-49

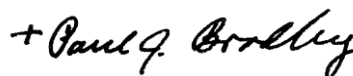
If one were to choose not to be vaccinated, one would have a moral responsibility to embrace the necessary precautions to avoid spreading the disease to others.

At this same time, we join our voices to call for the development of vaccines that have no connection to abortion. Our consciences must not be dulled, nor may we imply in any way that abortion is acceptable.

Let us implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that God may bring an end to the pandemic and that all esteem and respect the dignity of human life.



Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron  
Archbishop of Detroit



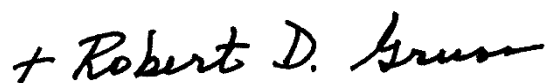
Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley  
Bishop of Kalamazoo



Most Reverend Earl A. Boyea  
Bishop of Lansing



Most Reverend John F. Doerfler  
Bishop of Marquette



Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss  
Bishop of Saginaw



Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator  
Diocese of Gaylord



Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak  
Bishop of Grand Rapids



18 de diciembre de 2020

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

¡La paz sea con ustedes!

En estos días de Adviento de preparación para la venida de nuestro Señor, esperamos y oramos para que el Príncipe de la Paz los consuele y los acerque hacia él. Durante el presente año las luchas con la pandemia global del COVID-19 han pesado gravemente en nuestros corazones, sin embargo, nuestro Señor ha estado con nosotros para profundizar nuestra fe y confianza en él. Conoce de nuestras oraciones por ti y por todos los trabajadores de la salud que tan diligentemente cuidan de quienes están enfermos.

A medida que las vacunas para el COVID-19 empiezan a estar disponibles, queremos hablar de las cuestiones morales que han ido surgiendo, en la medida en que algunas vacunas se desarrollan usando líneas de células que se han originado a partir del tejido tomado de bebés que fueron abortados hace décadas.<sup>1</sup> El aborto es un mal grave, y debemos evitar la complicidad en el aborto. Oremos por la paz, la sanación y la misericordia de Dios por todas aquellas personas que han abortado.

En el momento de escribir este comunicado, la Administración de Alimentos y Medicamentos (FDA) ha dado su aprobación para el uso de emergencia de la vacuna contra el COVID-19 que desarrolló la compañía Pfizer. Dos otras vacunas, una desarrollada por la compañía Moderna y la otra por la compañía AstraZeneca, también podrían obtener la aprobación de la FDA.<sup>2</sup>

Está moralmente permitido recibir las vacunas desarrolladas por Pfizer y Moderna. Ninguna de esas vacunas ha usado en su diseño, desarrollo o producción líneas celulares originadas en tejidos tomados de bebés abortados. Sin embargo, tanto la vacuna de Pfizer como la de Moderna usaron esa línea celular en las pruebas de confirmación. No obstante, esta conexión con el aborto es muy remota, y es importante tener en cuenta que hay varios niveles de responsabilidad. Una mayor responsabilidad moral recae en los investigadores que en quienes reciben la vacuna. La Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe ha expresado que es moralmente permisible ser vacunado si no hay alternativas y hay serios riesgos para la salud.<sup>3</sup> Esos riesgos graves para la salud están presentes debido a la actual pandemia.

Sin embargo, la vacuna desarrollada por AstraZeneca es más problemática desde el punto de vista moral, pues en su diseño, producción, desarrollo y pruebas de confirmación sí usó una línea celular que se originó a partir de tejido tomado de un bebé abortado. Esta vacuna sólo puede recibirse si no hay otras alternativas. Se permitiría aceptar la vacuna de AstraZeneca solo si uno no puede elegir otra vacuna y un retraso en la vacunación puede ocasionar consecuencias graves para la salud de uno mismo y de los demás. Su

<sup>1</sup> Para más información acerca de la moralidad de las vacunas en contra del COVID-19, véase la declaración conjunta de los presidentes del Comité de Doctrina y Actividades Pro-Vida de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos Estadounidenses (USCCB) en la que se basa nuestra declaración: [moral-considerations-covid-vaccines \(usccb.org\)](https://www.usccb.org/moral-considerations-covid-vaccines)

<sup>2</sup> Para más información acerca de las vacunas específicas que se están desarrollando para el COVID-19 vea esta tabla de referencia de Charlotte Lozier Institute: [COVID-19-Vaccine-Candidates-and-Abortion-Derived-Cell-Lines.pdf \(lozierinstitute.org\)](https://www.lozierinstitute.org/COVID-19-Vaccine-Candidates-and-Abortion-Derived-Cell-Lines.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe, Instrucción sobre algunas cuestiones de bioética (Dignitas Personae) (2008), núms. 35-36: [Instruction Dignitas Personae on Certain Bioethical Questions, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith \(vatican.va\)](https://www.vatican.va/holy-seer/secretary-of-state/communications/press-conferences/2008/08/083536_instruction_dignitas_personae_on_certain_bioethical_questions_congregation_for_the_doctrine_of_the_faith_vatican.va)

<sup>4</sup> Pontificia Academia para la Vida, "Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Foetuses," (9 de junio de 2005) en National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly 6:3 (2006): 541-49



producción es algo similar a la vacuna contra la rubéola, que la Academia Pontificia para la Vida indicó que podría recibirse por razones graves y si no hay otras alternativas.<sup>4</sup>

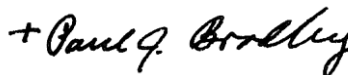
Si uno decidiera no vacunarse, tendría la responsabilidad moral de adoptar las precauciones necesarias para evitar la propagación de la enfermedad a otros.

Al mismo tiempo, unimos nuestras voces para pedir el desarrollo de vacunas que no tengan conexión con el aborto. Nuestras conciencias no deben entorpecerse, ni por ninguna manera debemos insinuar que el aborto es aceptable.

Imploremos la intercesión de la Bienaventurada Virgen María, para que Dios ponga fin a la pandemia y que todos estimen y respeten la dignidad de la vida humana.



Excelentísimo Allen H. Vigneron  
Arzobispo de Detroit



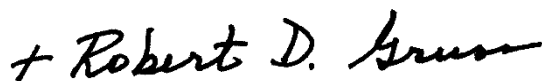
Excelentísimo Paul J. Bradley  
Obispo de Kalamazoo



Excelentísimo Earl A. Boyea  
Obispo de Lansing



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Obispo de Marquette



Excelentísimo Robert D. Gruss  
Obispo de Saginaw



Excelentísimo Walter A. Hurley  
Administrador Apostólico  
Diócesis de Gaylord



Excelentísimo David J. Walkowiak  
Obispo de Grand Rapids

## A YEAR OF ST JOSEPH



Pope Francis has released an Apostolic Letter about Saint Joseph and has declared a “Year of St. Joseph” which will be observed from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021.

The letter, *Patris corde* (“a Father’s heart”) was released on the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Joseph as patron of the Universal Church by Pope Francis.

His Holiness writes: After Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than Joseph, her spouse. My Predecessors reflected on the message contained in the limited information handed down by the Gospels in order to appreciate more fully his central role in the history of salvation. Blessed Pius IX declared him “Patron of the Catholic Church”, Venerable Pius XII proposed him as “Patron of Workers” and Saint John Paul II as “Guardian of the Redeemer”. Saint Joseph is universally invoked as the “patron of a happy death”.

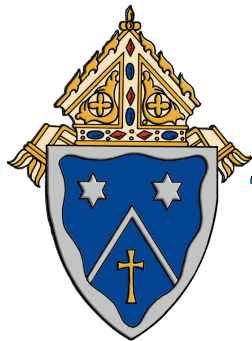
Now, one hundred and fifty years after his proclamation as *Patron of the Catholic Church* by Blessed Pius IX (8 December 1870), I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience. For, as Jesus says, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (*Mt 12:34*).

My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how “our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone... How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all”. Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.”

For a full text of the letter, please visit:

[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap\\_20201208\\_patris-corde.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html)

Immaculate Mary, pray for us.  
St. Joseph, pray for us.



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

611 WEST NORTH STREET  
 GAYLORD, MI 49735  
 PHONE: 989.732.5147  
 FAX: 989.705.3589

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / December 8, 2020

### **Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools Joins Member Schools and Families in Pursuing Legal Action to Allow Nonpublic High Schools to Remain Open**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — The Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools (MANS) announced in a [December 7 press release](#) that it has joined three of its member high schools and several families in filing suit in federal court in the Western District of Michigan against the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon.

The suit, filed in response to the [December 7 MDHHS order](#) extending the “pause” of in-person learning in religious high schools, asserts multiple constitutional violations including that of the First Amendment right to practice religion. The suit’s intent is to ensure that MANS member schools, which include Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gaylord, can resume educating their students in a manner consistent with each school’s COVID-19 safety plans.

“Each of our diocese’s Catholic schools is a member of MANS and will be impacted by decisions that are made,” says Mr. Michael Buell, Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Gaylord. “In our schools, COVID-19 safety plans have been in place throughout the 2020-21 school year. We have been following direction from the MDHHS and requiring strict safety measures in our schools throughout the pandemic, and, thankfully, these protocols have been successful in our Catholic schools.

“We are hopeful that outcome of this suit will allow us to continue making decisions regarding the education of our students at the local school level, which has proven successful thus far. We believe this maintains the constitutional rights of our families and is in the best interest of our students, families, staff, and communities.”

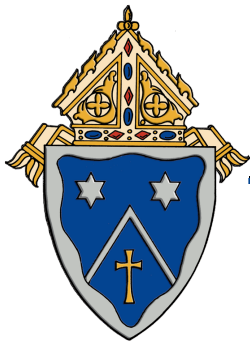
Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, states, “Catholic education is of immeasurable significance. We are very supportive of this effort to protect our religious freedoms and rights as the Church, and, at the same time, continue providing a safe learning environment for our students. Sadly, this is a polarizing time in our state and nation, and there is potential that any lawsuit could unintentionally perpetuate such division. Our prayer is that this will not be the case. Rather, we pray that just decisions will be made that safeguard our religious rights and freedoms and protect the common good.”

- END -

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Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, COVID-19, Catholic High Schools, Education

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**DIOCESE OF GAYLORD**

611 WEST NORTH STREET  
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**November 23, 2020**

**A Message from the Diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools**

Dear Catholic School Colleagues, Parents, and Families:

As you may or may not be aware, I am retiring from my role as Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Gaylord effective November 27, 2020. When initially accepting the position, my original intent was to stay only until this past June, 2020. Then COVID hit, and I realized I needed to continue at least long enough to assist school personnel in planning for a successful return to school in the fall. Thankfully, most schools are now up and running and it was again time to consider stepping away and retiring after 41 years in education.

I wish to express my deep appreciation for all those connected to the Catholic Schools for their hard work and dedication in making the schools as successful as they have become. I am thankful to have been a part of the team effort that includes school staff, parish priests, and parents coming together to make our schools the special gems they are, scattered throughout Northern Michigan.

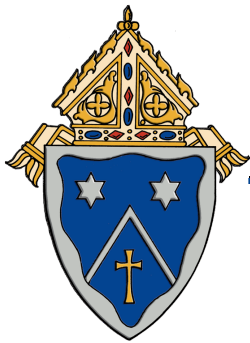
Thank you to all the wonderful people in the Diocese of Gaylord who put their faith in God and their children in Catholic Schools. I will pray for your continued success moving forward.

God bless,

Frank Sander  
*Superintendent of Catholic Schools*

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*"The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Gaylord, inspired by the life of Jesus Christ and rooted in the Catholic faith, foster Christian discipleship, academic excellence, self-responsibility and service to others."*



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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611 WEST NORTH STREET  
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### A New Venture

November 20, 2020

Dear Brothers Priests, Pastoral Administrators and Deacons:

For some years now, the Hispanic community has moved about from parish to parish without a stable base or center for operations. The Hispanic Apostolate currently rents office space in a Traverse City strip mall, and a Sunday evening Mass in Spanish is offered at Immaculate Conception Church in Traverse City. Given the growth of the Hispanic community in the area, it is important to have available a suitable, stable place of worship for the many Catholic members and to serve as a base in assisting the many members of the Hispanic community (migrants and others) in the area.

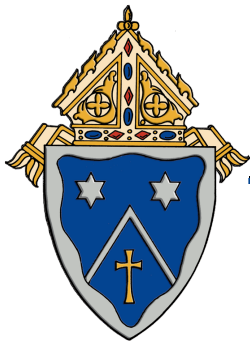
I have consulted with and received the agreement and consent of the Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors, and I am moving forward with the purchase of a small church and property at 9105 E. Fouch Road, Traverse City to be used by the Hispanic community for worship, education, office space and other activities. It will provide a focal point and base for this underserved Catholic population. I have asked the community to recommend the name to be used for the chapel/facility. Two options are *Our Lady of Guadalupe* and *St. Juan Diego Chapel*.

The property consists of a small church, a lower level social area and offices, a parking lot and 5.5 acres of property. The purchase price for the building and property was \$273,000 (well below the appraised value) and is being funded with a non-interest bearing loan from the diocese. Those willing and able to support and assist with the funding are welcome to contribute to this important project. Donations may be designated for the chapel, and sent to the Diocese of Gaylord (611 West North Street, Gaylord, 49735).

While much more needs to be done to build up our service to the Hispanic Catholic Community in the diocese, this chapel and center represent a step forward.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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611 WEST NORTH STREET  
 GAYLORD, MI 49735  
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**DATE:** November 20, 2020  
**TO:** Priests, Pastoral Administrators, Deacons, Diocesan Staff  
**FROM:** Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley *+ Walter A. Hurley*  
**RE:** **Charter Compliance and Diocesan Review Board**

### Charter Compliance

An annual audit is performed each year to review the compliance of the Diocese with the provisions of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Stonebridge Business Partners audits the compliance of all dioceses throughout the United States. Two auditors were here in late October for an on-site visit to examine the records of the compliance of the Diocese of Gaylord with the Charter. We have been advised that *“based on the results of our recently performed on-site audit of the Diocese of Gaylord, the Diocese has been found compliant with all the articles within the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in the 2019/2020 audit period. The conclusions reached as to the compliance of your Diocese are based on inquiry, observations and the review of specifically requested documentation furnished to Stonebridge Business Partners during the course of this audit.”* (See attached letter.)

We are grateful to the parishes, their staff and membership for their cooperation and commitment in creating and maintaining a safe environment for children and our people.

### Diocesan Review Board

I have recently appointed three new members to the Diocesan Review Board whose role is to assist the bishop in determining the credibility of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and other parish personnel brought forward in the Diocese. The Board also plays a role in reviewing the policies and practices of the Diocese and making recommendations to the bishop. The board is currently working on a revision and update of our current policies.

The newly appointed members of the Board are:

#### ***Michael Buell***

Michael Buell lives in Traverse City and is married to his wife, Mindy. They have three children. Mike has been the superintendent of the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools (GTACS) since 1999. He also has served as part-time and interim superintendent for the Diocese of Gaylord office of Catholic Schools over a 3 year period in the past. Mike is currently working on his PhD through the *Catholic University of America*, Washington, D.C.

***Honorable Thomas J. LaCross***

Tom has been married to Mary Ann since 1981, and they have three sons and twelve grandchildren. Tom is the Alpena County Probate Court judge and the 88<sup>th</sup> District Court judge for Alpena, graduating from Madonna College (now university), and Wayne State University Law School in 1984. Tom was the eastern regional director of Catholic Human Services, and on the Diocesan Pastoral Council for Bishop Patrick Cooney. He is a life-long member of St. Bernard Parish (now All Saints Parish) in Alpena.

***Deacon Michael P. Roy***

Michael is married to Diane and they have 3 children. They currently reside in Presque Isle. Deacon Roy is a former Alpena police officer and has taught criminal justice courses for 26 years. Michael and Diane owned and operated the *Royal Knight Theater* in Alpena. Michael was ordained a Deacon on October 17, 2020.

These new members join those who have been serving on the board for some time:

***Betsy Hardy***

Born and raised Catholic, Betsy has been a member of the Diocese of Gaylord since birth. She attended Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools for 12 years and received all of her sacraments at St. Francis Catholic Church in Traverse City, Michigan. Betsy is an active member at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Traverse City. As a Registered Nurse, she deeply values health and wellness in a spiritual context and has practiced in the area of Maternal Child Nursing for 20 years. She and her husband Tom have five children, Olivia, Julia, Thomas, Andrew and Sophia.

***Dave Martin***

Dave resides in Traverse City with his wife Helen. They have four grown children, of which two are married, and they have five grandchildren. He retired from Catholic Human Services in June of 2016 where he served as the CEO for 18 years as well as serving an additional 21 years as the regional administrator, program manager and caseworker. Dave and his wife both serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at St. Francis in Traverse City and he serves on the Pastoral Council. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business from Central Michigan University.

***Rev. Joseph Muszkiewicz***

Fr. Joe was ordained at 53 years of age. He attended Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisconsin. Prior to his ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Joe worked as a respiratory therapist for 16 years and 6 years in Polysomnography (sleep study) in Grand Rapids. He is the father of three adult children. Fr. Joe is currently the Pastor of a cluster of churches as well as the Catholic school in Alpena, Michigan.

***Mary O'Connor***

Mary is married, a mother of four grown children, and lives in Frankfort. She has a Master's Degree in Social Work, Master of Arts in Early Childhood Development and a Graduate Certificate in Addiction Studies. She is the Executive Director of Overlook Resources, Inc. Mary is an experienced behavioral health therapist and private practice clinician. She is a former Sister of Saint Joseph of Nazareth, having taught at Catholic schools in both the Diocese of Lansing and the Archdiocese of Detroit.

***Carl Stellin***

Carl is married and a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Bellaire, where he is the president of the ushers. He and his wife relocated from Troy, Michigan. They have three grown children. Carl holds a degree in economics and is currently employed as a real estate broker.

***Kristy Torsky***

Kristy served as the K-12 School Counselor at St. Mary Cathedral School. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Applied Social Science from the University of Michigan, Flint and her Master's Degree in Counseling from Western Michigan University. She has completed post Master's studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, is a Certified Solution-Focused Counseling practitioner and a National Certified Counselor. Kristy is married to Nick and they have two children, Nick and Anna. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, running, yoga, kayaking and watching her kids play sports.

***Kim Walters***

Kim is married and a mother of four. She is a member of St. Francis Parish in Traverse City. Kim is a Scheduling Manager for Hospitalist Medicine Physicians and has worked as Scheduling Consultant for Emergency Medicine Physicians for 10 years. She is trained as a cosmetologist and in the past, has donated several years as a Girl Scout leader.

I am grateful for the willingness of these members who bring experience and competence to addressing these important matters.

+WAH





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November 4, 2020

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord  
611 W. North Street  
Gaylord, Michigan 49735

Dear Bishop Hurley:

Based on the results of our recently performed on-site audit of the Diocese of Gaylord, the Diocese has been found compliant with all audited Articles within the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* for the 2019/2020 audit period.

The conclusions reached as to the compliance of your Diocese are based upon inquiry, observation and the review of specifically requested documentation furnished to StoneBridge Business Partners during the course of this audit.

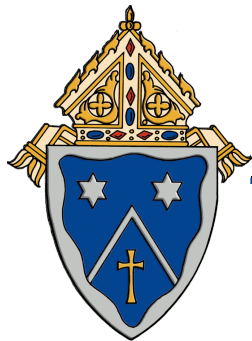
Thank you for your cooperation during this process.

Sincerely,

*StoneBridge Business Partners*

StoneBridge Business Partners  
Rochester, New York

cc: Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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**For Immediate Release / November 10, 2020**

### **Statement on Holy See's Report on Former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has released the following comment in response to the [Vatican's report](#) concerning former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick. Having served as the Bishop of Metuchen, Archbishop of Newark, and Archbishop of Washington D.C., former Cardinal McCarrick has been the subject of an in-depth investigation by the Vatican following numerous allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct. The Vatican's report has been compiled over the last two years, with preparation for the report beginning in 2018. The report examines former cardinal McCarrick's public ministry and the Holy See's decision-making process in McCarrick's rise in the hierarchy after being accused of sexual abuse.

In response to the release of the Vatican's report, Bishop Hurley states,

“It is a tragedy that any such abuse should ever take place. The horror of abuse destroys the lives of victim-survivors and casts a dark shadow on the goodness and beauty of Christ's Church. Moreover, the thought that Church leaders may have added to such scandal, either through action or inaction, is unconscionable. There is no room for such appalling misconduct within the Body of Christ. I am deeply saddened by these events, but I am grateful for the honesty, transparency and accountability that is coming about in the Church. We must do everything that we can to bring about justice, as well as healing and hope.

“I am struck by the candor and openness of the report from the Holy See. The publication of this report demonstrates the commitment of our Holy Father and the Church to transparency in handling these matters; I welcome the truthfulness that this report provides. I am troubled that there has been a need for such an investigation, but I am encouraged by its completion. We as a Church can learn much from this report as we explore more fully its implications for the future and reflect on the errors of the past.

“As I review the findings within this report, I invite you to join me in prayer for all victim-survivors, whether minors or adults, of abuse. We will continue doing everything we can to protect the vulnerable and ensure that such tragic events never happen again.”

Anyone who has suffered abuse by a priest, bishop, or someone in the Church is urged to report this abuse to law enforcement and to Church authorities. Detailed information on how and where to report abuse can be found at <http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org/how-to-make-a-report-212/>.

- END -

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**Keywords:** *Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Vatican, Holy See, Theodore McCarrick, Abuse*

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# NEWS

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## **President of U.S. Bishops' Conference Issues Statement on 2020 Presidential Election**

November 7, 2020

WASHINGTON – Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued the following statement on the 2020 presidential election:

We thank God for the blessings of liberty. The American people have spoken in this election. Now is the time for our leaders to come together in a spirit of national unity and to commit themselves to dialogue and compromise for the common good.

As Catholics and Americans, our priorities and mission are clear. We are here to follow Jesus Christ, to bear witness to His love in our lives, and to build His Kingdom on earth. I believe that at this moment in American history, Catholics have a special duty to be peacemakers, to promote fraternity and mutual trust, and to pray for a renewed spirit of true patriotism in our country.

Democracy requires that all of us conduct ourselves as people of virtue and self-discipline. It requires that we respect the free expression of opinions and that we treat one another with charity and civility, even as we might disagree deeply in our debates on matters of law and public policy.

As we do this, we recognize that Joseph R. Biden, Jr., has received enough votes to be elected the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. We congratulate Mr. Biden and acknowledge that he joins the late President John F. Kennedy as the second United States president to profess the Catholic faith. We also congratulate Sen. Kamala D. Harris of California, who becomes the first woman ever elected as vice president.

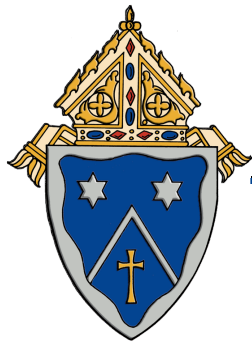
We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of this great nation, to intercede for us. May she help us to work together to fulfill the beautiful vision of America's missionaries and founders — one nation under God, where the sanctity of every human life is defended and freedom of conscience and religion are guaranteed.

###

Media Contact:

[Chieko Noguchi](mailto:Chieko.Noguchi@usccb.org)

202-541-3200



## DIocese of GAYLORD

611 WEST NORTH STREET  
 GAYLORD, MI 49735  
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DATE: October 13, 2020

TO: Priests, Pastoral Administrators, Deacons, Seminarians

FROM: Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley *+ Walter A. Hurley*

RE: **Modifications to COVID-19 Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations**

### **Modifications to COVID-19 Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations**

In these challenging times, we are committed to keeping our people safe and at the same time maintaining the best (near normal) liturgical practices that are possible under these circumstances. We have had several months with certain protocols in place; I want to thank the parishes that have taken these protocols and observed them carefully and seriously. I must admit that I find it troublesome that some very small number refuse to wear masks and place everyone at risk. I know that some of the parishes have been very strict on the issue of wearing masks, and I commend you for your care and concern for all the people.

Effective immediately, you may begin to make the following modifications to parish liturgical protocols.

#### **Capacity:**

With the winter months coming up, where it is possible to do so, our pastors are allowed to admit the number they can safely accommodate while maintaining the required sanitizing; social distancing (six feet minimum); and the required use of face masks. This number is determined by the seating capacity of the church and is no longer limited to the previous 25% capacity. Due to church size, this means that there will continue to be occupancy restrictions in some parishes. This modification presumes high touch surfaces are being disinfected after each liturgy and that hand sanitizers are available and used by all.

#### **Music:**

The absence of music has been a burden for many, and we are making these modifications to the present protocols to gradually resume our normal liturgical practices. Effective immediately — with the continued expectation that all in the congregation will wear a face covering — the proper parts of the Mass may be sung by all: Psalm response; Alleluia Verse; the Holy Holy; Eucharistic Acclamation; and Lamb of God.

The Gloria, Creed and Our Father should *not* be sung. A cantor or other singer may sing a hymn or special music at other places in the liturgy.

#### **Communion Distribution:**

As much as possible, we should return to the usual practice of people coming forward to receive Communion (observing social distancing of at least six feet). Markings can be placed on the floor as needed. This practice is already used in many parishes in the diocese. Some parishes will be limited by narrow aisles and pew layout. Only where this is the case and social distancing cannot be maintained should the ministers go between the pews to distribute the Eucharist. The practice of distributing Communion after Mass and as people are leaving the church should be discontinued and returned to its proper place within the liturgy.

**The Presentation of Gifts:**

The presentation of wine and hosts may resume during the Offertory. The members of the assembly who will present the gifts are to be wearing masks and must sanitize their hands before picking up the vessels and after presenting them.

**Mass Servers:**

Using appropriate safety measures, hand sanitizers and masks in procession, a limited use of Mass servers is permitted. They should not hold the Missal for the Collect or Prayer after Communion (a stand for the Missal or Excerpts from the Roman Missal can be placed in front of the presider's chair). They may assist by carrying the cross and candles in the entrance procession and recessional. They may assist in setting the altar with proper sanitizing of hands. They may participate in a simple Gospel procession with candles.

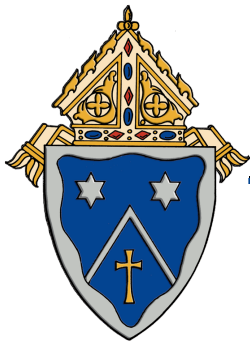
An entrance procession and recession to greet people can be resumed with the required masks for priest, etc. in these processions.

**After Mass:**

People should be asked to exit row by row to the degree that is possible to keep the appropriate social distancing requirements and not gather after Mass for visiting.

**A caution:** As you know, things are constantly changing. In the event of changing circumstances, we remain flexible in the case that we have to return to a more restricted approach again in the future.

It is our hope that these modifications will help to bolster people's hope and feelings of joy as a worshipping community, and at the same time keep safe. Let us pray for each other and those whose lives have been lost or affected by this virus as we journey through this time of uncertainty.



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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### A Reflection on Faithful Citizenship October 9, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

*Whom should we vote for in the upcoming election? How can I vote in good conscience when no candidate unconditionally aligns with Catholic moral teaching?* American voters, particularly Catholics, face very difficult choices when considering how to vote in the upcoming election. However, these decisions should not be avoided or cause for division, but rather embraced as an opportunity to contribute to the common good as a faithful citizen.

A faithful citizen is a well-informed and prayerful one who seriously considers all of the moral issues. This interior reflection *should* challenge us because both national party platforms contain seriously flawed moral positions. This leaves us with a moral dilemma calling for prayer, reflection and a formed conscience in accordance with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and teachings of the Catholic Church.

In our consideration, we must each take time to humbly examine all of the three guiding moral principles for the development of a just society: 1) the defense of life from conception to natural death; 2) the needs of the weakest members of our society; and 3) the pursuit of the common good. These principles should be further considered by looking at the many specific issues, such as abortion; euthanasia; assisted suicide; capital punishment; racism; marriage between a man and a woman; the protection and formation of our children; religious liberty; care for immigrants, refugees and migrants; protection for the poor and vulnerable; the pursuit of peace and justice within education, healthcare, housing and jobs/work; and the care for God's creation.

As we prayerfully consider these significant moral positions, we must remember that our vote can never be reduced to a single issue, regardless of how gravely serious this issue is. Sadly, fundamental positions of both platforms conflict with Catholic moral teaching in significant ways. The U.S. bishops reaffirm in [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#):

“As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet if a candidate's position on a single issue promotes an intrinsically evil act, such as legal abortion, redefining marriage in a way that denies its essential meaning, or racist behavior, a voter may legitimately disqualify a candidate from receiving support.”<sup>(42)</sup>

However, “There may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position even on policies promoting an intrinsically evil act may reasonably decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons. Voting in this way would be permissible only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil.”<sup>(35)</sup>

In our highly imperfect world, we so often find ourselves in the midst of a moral dilemma. Too easily this tempts us to look for simple solutions or to become bitter, resentful or judgmental of others. In considering the upcoming election, we remember that no earthly leadership can fully satisfy our deep longing for the guidance that only God can provide as our Father.

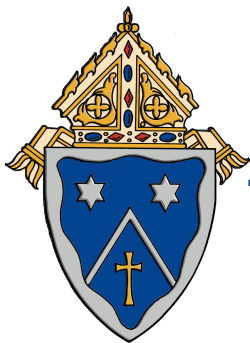
It is my prayer that our political discourse will rise above the noise, as we are called to be a people “set apart” by the grace of God. I urge you not to fall into divisive discourse as you work through these difficult decisions, but

rather build one another up. If Jesus was able to love his enemies, even the very soldiers who crucified him — which includes all of us — we too should aspire to that same level of charity towards others, particularly those with whom we have significant disagreement. May we seek the Lord for guidance and unfailing help in our desire to follow what we know to be just and right during this election season, and always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Walter A. Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator



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**DIocese of GAYLORD**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
OCTOBER 8, 2020

**Statement Regarding Kidnapping Plot Against Michigan's Governor**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has released the following statement in response to news that several men are facing charges as they are accused of conspiring to kidnap Michigan's Governor Gretchen Whitmer:

“I am deeply saddened and disturbed by this threat against Governor Whitmer. On behalf of the Diocese of Gaylord, I would like to express our thanksgiving for Governor Whitmer's safety and our gratitude to law enforcement whose swift action protected her from this tragedy. The Governor and her family are in our prayers during this difficult time.

“Hostage taking and kidnapping are egregious acts of terrorism that demonstrate a shocking disregard for the dignity of the human person. As Catholics, we firmly believe that such acts are morally reprehensible, gravely going against the intrinsic values of life, justice and charity. Such evil should trouble us all. Instead of hatred and animosity — which breed violence and terrorism — we are called to love one another.”

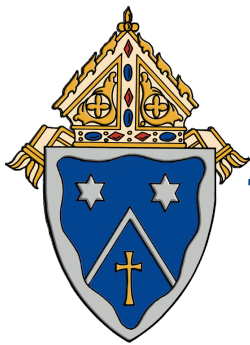
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Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Governor Gretchen Whitmer

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## DIocese of GAYLORD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 OCTOBER 7, 2020

### **Bishop Walter A. Hurley Welcomes Pope Francis' Encyclical on Human Fraternity**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, issued a statement today welcoming Pope Francis' new encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship."

Bishop Hurley states, "I welcome this teaching of our Holy Father, which stresses that God has created each of us with equal sanctity and dignity, designed for brotherhood and sisterhood. 'Fratelli Tutti' is received with thanksgiving during this season of isolation unlike any we have experienced in our lifetime – a timely reminder that human life cannot rightly exist without meaningful relationships.

"God has a beautiful purpose for us which only comes to fulfillment when we properly order our lives with central focus on love of God and love of neighbor. This love should permeate every aspect of our existence, shaping our societies, our economies and our politics. In light of the upcoming elections, the Holy Father's words remind us that we must approach politics with the gospel message at the forefront, recognizing that political leadership is a gift intended to provide justice and order in our society.

"In his letter, Pope Francis challenges us to a renewed love of neighbor, through protecting the weak and powerless and rejecting the degradation of the dignity of the human person. This rejection of selfishness lies in stark contrast to our society's narrow focus on one's self. Yet, it is only when we look upward and outward that we find true joy and true hope. When we radically love others — those of every background, creed and color – we open our hearts in the same way Mary opened her heart to Jesus.

"This remains our invitation, our calling and our challenge: To recognize Christ in the face of others; to seek justice and mercy devoid of violence and vengeance; and to choose compassion in all circumstances. Jesus' obedient journey to Calvary is the ultimate expression of this love, modeling how we too can carry our cross for the salvation of others.

"I pray that 'Fratelli Tutti' will spark new life within our own hearts, within the Church and throughout the nations. As we reflect on our Holy Father's words, may we be able to more fully live out Jesus' new commandment to love one another, as he has loved us."

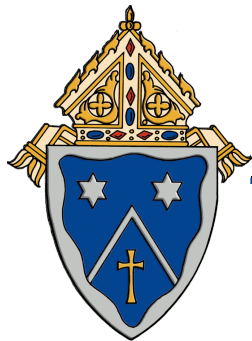
Pope Francis' encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti," can be found at the [Vatican's website](#).

- END -

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Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Papal Encyclical, Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti

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## DIocese OF GAYLORD

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611 WEST NORTH STREET  
 GAYLORD, MI 49735  
 PHONE: 989.732.5147  
 FAX: 989.705.3589

### World Mission Sunday: October 18, 2020

October 1, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

World Mission Sunday, this year on the weekend of October 17-18, is our annual worldwide Eucharistic celebration for the missions and missionaries of the world. Pope Francis, in his message for World Mission Sunday, implores us:

*“In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: ‘Here am I, send me’ (6:8). This is the ever new response to the Lord’s question: ‘Whom shall I send?’ This invitation from God’s merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity as a whole in the current world crisis.”*

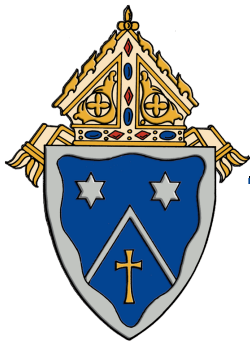
Pope Francis reminds us that as baptized Catholics, we are personally called to mission. We are called to bring Christ’s love to others, especially those most forgotten. This special Sunday brings to life our baptismal call in a personal way, inviting each of us to be “sent out” to the ends of the earth by supporting missionaries and those they serve. Much-needed gifts in this effort sustain priests, religious and lay pastoral leaders in more than 1,100 mission dioceses across Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, parts of Latin America and Europe.

World Mission Sunday is a beautiful invitation to reflect on our common call to mission, but more profoundly than that, it is an invitation to move beyond reflection — we are called to *action*. The Lord whispers to each of us, “*Whom shall I send?*” and we too must discern how we can answer, “*Here I am, send me.*”

I am grateful for your generosity and concern for your brothers and sisters in need, both at home and around the world. I pray that you will join me in response on World Mission Sunday, both in prayer and generous sacrifice to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, answering the Lord’s invitation with a resounding “Here I am, send me!”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
 Apostolic Administrator



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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611 WEST NORTH STREET  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

### **Respect Life Month**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — October is annually observed as “Respect Life Month” in the Catholic Church, a season to reflect on God’s precious gift of life. This year’s theme for Respect Life Month is “Live the Gospel of Life,” inspired by the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul II’s encyclical “The Gospel of Life.” Catholics are reminded by Saint Pope John Paul II that the dignity of the human person should never be diminished, and that it is ever-critical to care for and uphold human life, particularly of the unborn, the elderly, persons with disabilities and the marginalized of our society.

As Respect Life Month begins, Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, states, “Human life is indeed a precious gift. I remain in awe that our Creator molded us in His own image and likeness — ‘wonderfully made’ we truly are. This gift of life is fragile, however, and as God’s people we must remember that we are to both respect this gift and stand firm in defense of it. There are many pressing “life issues” at hand in our world today, each threatening the dignity of human life in its own way. We must not turn a blind eye to these matters, but rather ask for the Lord’s help to be bold and courageous in our efforts to protect the most vulnerable among us, preserving the gift of life he has so generously given to us.”

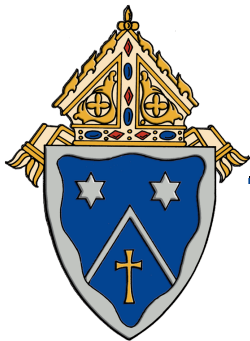
Catholic churches will celebrate Respect Life Sunday on October 4, 2020. Resources to aid in the celebration and observance of Respect Life Month can be located on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ dedicated webpage <https://www.respectlife.org>.

- END -

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Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Respect Life Month

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## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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 PHONE: 989.732.5147  
 FAX: 989.705.3589

DATE: September 14, 2020

TO: Priests, Pastoral Administrators

FROM: Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley *+ Walter C. Hurley*

RE: Emergency Disaster Special Collection: September 26/27, 2020

### **Emergency Disaster Special Collection: September 26/27, 2020**

In the face of the hurricanes that have devastated the South and the fires that have destroyed much in Oregon, Washington and California, the leadership of the USCCB has asked that we consider a special collection for the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund to assist the dioceses in these areas that have experienced such loss and suffering. Funds collected in this special appeal will help those affected by providing much-needed emergency resources such as water, food, shelter, and medical care and aid. Funds will also assist with long-term recovery in the pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church.

Enclosed is a letter from Archbishop Gomez, president of the USCCB, as well as a letter from Bishop Glen Provost, bishop of St. Charles, for your information.

**I am asking each parish to consider a special collection on the weekend of September 26/27** to benefit our brothers and sisters in need as a result of the natural disasters that are affecting their lives and the life of the Church.

On behalf of the Diocese of Gaylord, we will contribute \$10,000 to support our brothers and sisters in this tragedy. Procedurally, the following may assist you with this collection:

- Funds should be forwarded to the Finance Office at the Diocese.
- Please send one check from the parish, not individual gifts from parishioners.
- The diocese will then forward these funds to the [USCCB's Office of National Collections](#).

I reaffirm Archbishop Gomez's recognition that this is a challenging time for a special collection, in light of the economic impact that COVID-19 has had on our parishes. Yet, it is because of these very challenges that it is all the more critical we do *what we can* to help those in need who have been affected by both pandemic and natural catastrophe.

Thank you for your prayers for those impacted by this situation, and for your efforts with this special collection.



## ***Office of the President***

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3100 • FAX 202-541-3166

Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles  
*President*

September 3, 2020

Your Eminence/Excellency:

The traditional storm season has only just begun and already we have witnessed the devastating impact of Hurricane Laura and the California wildfires. Thousands of homes, businesses, and churches have been severely damaged or destroyed, and the impacts will be long-lasting. Please find attached a letter to all bishops from Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, by which the Bishop conveys the dire nature of the situation in the aftermath of the hurricane.

We offer our prayers to families who have lost loved ones, homes, and businesses. Archbishop Etienne, the Chairman of our Committee on National Collections, has been in touch with several bishops to learn about their situations and to offer our prayers and our desire to be of assistance in this time of need.

It is reasonable to expect an increasing number of natural disasters. As we often do in these situations, I suggest we take up a voluntary special collection for the humanitarian, long-term recovery, and Church needs arising from these calamities. I ask that we make a special appeal to support the USCCB Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and that we each take up the collection as soon as possible so that those most in need can receive assistance quickly. The annual collection for The Catholic University of America is scheduled in many dioceses the first or second weekend in September, and so I recommend that the special collection be taken up on the nearest weekend that does not conflict with any local CUA appeal.

The funds collected in this special appeal will become part of the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and will be used to support the efforts of Catholic Charities USA and/or Catholic Relief Services, the official relief agencies of the U.S. Catholic Church, as they and their local agencies respond to immediate emergency needs for such necessities as water, food, shelter, and medical care, and aid in long-term rebuilding and recovery efforts; and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church. Funds will be used in response to Hurricane Laura and any other disasters that occur and will be distributed where they are most needed. However, if such purpose(s) become unnecessary, impractical or impossible to fill, USCCB may use such contributions for other emergency disaster relief where it is most needed as determined by the Committee on National Collections using its emergency response protocol.

I recognize that parish and diocesan activities have been impacted severely by COVID-19 and that the local capacity for fund-raising this year may be more challenging than with past emergency collections. However, I know the generosity of our people and their deep care for those in need. I trust that you will find the best way of making these needs known to your people and I have confidence in their prayerful consideration and response.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles  
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

September 3, 2020  
St. Gregory the Great

Dear Brother Bishops,

A week has passed since Hurricane Laura devastated our diocese, including serious damage to sister dioceses in the region. The Diocese of Lake Charles suffered a head-on collision with the storm, for the eye passed directly over us in Lake Charles.

My house is only about 30 miles north of the coast. In the end, for us who live inland, the wind left not a dwelling, business, or structure undamaged. Utility poles were down, debris littered the streets, and trees like fallen leaves covered lawns and drove through roofs like cleavers. Electricity is out, and the authorities tell us it will not be restored for two to four weeks or more. There is no internet and no telephone. Only cell phones work—sometimes. Much of the diocese is without water service. For the places that do have running water, it's unreliable and non-potable. The city has a mandated curfew. At present about fifteen priests have no residence. We would hope to house them in not-so-damaged rectories and at our retreat center once a generator is installed.

The generosity and kindness of neighboring dioceses have been so encouraging. Archbishop Gregory Aymond, our Metropolitan, has been particularly solicitous. Across the nation we have received offers to help. Our Catholic Charities is in full operation. Their building, one that we purchased and completely redesigned in the years following Hurricane Rita, sustained very little damage; yet, across the street far more substantial warehouses and businesses were destroyed. Truly God is good to His people! To all of you who have called and reached out, we are very, very grateful.

The parishes on the coast were ravaged. I have begun my visits to them. The storm destroyed the facilities of at least three parishes. Four other coastal parishes were severely damaged. We are still conducting our assessment of these churches.

However, the damage was not restricted to the coast. Roofs of inland churches, religious education buildings, schools, and rectories were ripped off. Just today we learned that the roof of the Cathedral will require extensive repair and perhaps replacement. Our only Catholic High School is partially destroyed. One pastor, whose parish facilities are particularly large, said the entire brick wall on one side of the rectory collapsed. His parochial school cannot reopen because of extensive damage. The pastor is now sleeping in a makeshift travel trailer. The elderly, retired priest living with him was evacuated to Texas. The remaining priests of the parish will be offered residence in a wing of our retreat center. They will join other priests whose rectories were destroyed.

I could describe more, but the situation is dire. We have organized a recovery operation within the Diocese to deal with repairs and building, insurance claims and immediate needs. We have established a diocesan fund for hurricane relief and rebuilding, and I have appointed a team to manage our recovery. Details of our efforts, are currently on our website, which can be found at <http://www.lcdiocese.org>. Photographs of the chancery, churches, and various sites can be seen at <http://www.lcdiocese.org/3-news/2984-hurricane-laura-photo-gallery>

As you know, insurance deductibles are high and government assistance is complex. The rehabilitation of the Diocese will take years to accomplish. This is the third catastrophic hurricane for us in fifteen years. Although no two storms are alike, to a greater or lesser degree, all is *déjà-vu* with the variation this time of more extensive wind damage.

Thank you for your prayers. Above all, please know of our gratitude for your concern and of our prayers for your intentions, as I remain

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen John Provost", with a decorative flourish at the end.

✠Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles

September 8, 2020  
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Brother Bishops,

Beginning what promises to be a lengthy recovery from Hurricane Laura, I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the help that you have extended to us in the Diocese of Lake Charles. Some of you have visited. Many of you, our neighbors, have organized recovery groups to aid the victims. Still more of you from distant locations have contributed from already-stretched resources to our rebuilding efforts.

In my earlier letter, attached to the USCCB President's announcement of a voluntary national collection for other worthy recipients, I described, as best I could, the dire situation. Here at ground zero of Hurricane Laura, we know that this was no ordinary storm. One utility company's gauge clocked a wind gust of 187 mph! We sincerely appreciate your response to this Category 4 storm.

Because of your generosity, we have fed and are feeding thousands and assisting with humanitarian needs through Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana based in Lake Charles. A generator was installed at our retreat center to house the homeless priests. Thousands of tarps are being distributed and installed on leaking churches, houses, and businesses.

Last Saturday I visited two of the demolished parishes on the coast. One of them, Our Lady Star of the Sea, is a shrine, established by Bishop Maurice Schexnayder to commemorate the death of 500 men, women, and children in Hurricane Audrey of 1957. While attending the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Schexnayder commissioned the life-sized, Carrara marble statue of Our Lady. Every year at the start of the hurricane season we process to the shrine and offer Holy Mass. The church was destroyed. The statue of our Lady, with one arm raised to the Gulf and another embracing a child, still stands. The caption beneath the image reads, "Do not harm my children."

On Sunday I celebrated Mass for the survivors under a large tent along the highway to the Gulf. The Vicar General, Dean, and pastors of the demolished parishes joined me. Following Mass, we distributed generators, chain saws, and gift cards to the congregation. These immediate needs were provided through the generosity of Catholic Charities, bishops of the region, and Catholic Church parishes from various dioceses.

Our Lady Star of the Sea still stands. The message was not simply one of survival but of hope. All is not lost. To paraphrase the words of the Prayer of St. Bernadette, affliction is part of God's



Will, and our prayer is that He will not abandon us to affliction. For believers, affliction is an invitation to love.

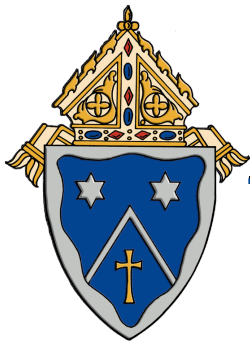
This you know and this is what has motivated your kindness. Thank you! Please be assured of the prayers and gratitude of humble fishermen, oil field workers, farmers, and other good hardworking men and women in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Asking God's blessings on you and your struggles, I remain

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen John Provost". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

✠Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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611 WEST NORTH STREET  
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FAX: 989.705.3589

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

### **Incorporation of Parishes**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced that the process of parish incorporation is underway; this process will incorporate every parish in the diocese as a Michigan nonprofit corporation.

The incorporation of diocesan parishes aligns the civil law structure with the ecclesiastical or church structures. According to church law and theology, each parish and diocese has its own unique set of rights and responsibilities, including the obligation to administer church property. The separate incorporation of parishes is the civil law structure that most accurately reflects ecclesiastical law and theology. Creating nonprofit parish corporations is the simplest and most effective way of ensuring that the rights of parishes regarding church property are respected, not only in church law, but in civil law.

Since 1911, the Holy See has requested that dioceses pursue parish incorporation, and many parishes in dioceses in the United States have long been incorporated, including some of the dioceses here in Michigan in recent times. This process in the Diocese of Gaylord begins after consultation with the College of Consultors and Finance Council of the diocese, and with their support and encouragement.

Bishop Hurley stated, “I am pleased that this process is underway in the Diocese of Gaylord — while this incorporation project won’t greatly alter the day-to-day for our pastors and their churches, it is of great significance that we align their civil law structure with that of the Church. This is a prudent task, one that we look forward to completing here in this diocese. I remain grateful for all our pastors and leaders, for the great work they are doing to meet the needs of their people, and I am thankful for their engagement in this endeavor for the greater good of the diocese as a whole.”

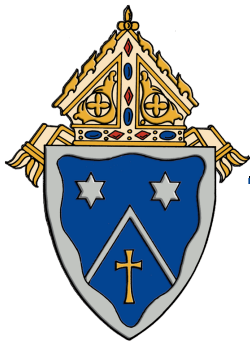
The diocese has shared information about this process of parish incorporation on their [website](#), both to inform about the process and to answer common questions.

- END -

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*Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Incorporation of Parishes*

*Media Contact: Mrs. Mackenzie Ritchie, Director of Communications / [mritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org](mailto:mritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org) / 989.705.3506*



## Guidelines for Addressing Invalid Baptisms

September 11, 2020

As we continue to move towards remedying possible invalid baptisms, the following will be useful in indicating how to proceed in certain situations. It is worth recalling that a sacrament once celebrated *is presumed to be valid* unless there is a compelling reason to regard it as invalid and celebrate it again.

The following outlines **possible situations** which may be encountered and **how to respond** to each situation:

### Situation #1:

**An individual comes forward stating to have witnessed an invalid baptism and has sufficient evidence.**

- If the invalidity of the baptism is determined to have been established, then baptism must be celebrated anew.
- Once the invalidity of the baptism has been established, the current Pastor of the person will perform the new baptism, and if confirmation is also required, he shall be given the faculty to confirm that person by the Bishop.
- The place where the new baptism occurs will become the location where all sacramental records are kept, and a notification of the new baptism should be sent to the parish where the invalid baptism took place so that any future enquiries may be directed to the new location.
- The Diocese will send a notification to the original parish of the invalidity of the original baptism.

### Situation #2:

**An individual comes forward stating he or she has witnessed an invalid baptism but does not appear to have sufficient evidence at first glance.**

- The determination of invalidity will depend on the nature of the evidence provided. Questions as follow may need to be answered: Is the minister of the baptism still alive and able to be contacted? Is the minister of the baptism one who is known to have done other invalid baptisms? Are there any witnesses, and if so, how many? Are these individuals willing to swear to the truth of their assertions?
- The person should fill out the appropriate form on the diocesan [website](#), and do so along with a priest or staff member of the parish if possible. The form should be forwarded to the diocese.

### Situation #3:

**A priest or a deacon comes forward to acknowledge that he has made use of the “We baptize ...” formula when baptizing.**

- In such a case, the invalidity of the baptism will be deemed to have been established and, as such, baptism must be celebrated anew.

- The priest or deacon should fill out the appropriate form on the diocesan [website](#) and forward it to the diocese.

#### **Situation #4:**

##### **It is established that multiple invalid baptisms were celebrated within a parish.**

- In situations in which multiple invalid baptisms have been celebrated, efforts will be made to contact all those who may have been affected by it.

#### **Situation #5:**

##### **It is established that an investigation does *not* result in a sufficient evidence of the invalidity of the baptism, but does appear to seriously call into question the validity of the baptism.**

- Sometimes it is not possible to make a clear determination because of the lack of sufficient evidence, but there is still cause for questioning the validity of the baptism. For example, there might be multiple witnesses who believe that the “We baptize ...” formula was used or that the priest or deacon might be one whom multiple individuals believe to have used the “We baptize ...” formula. In these instances, we will explore in more detail the available evidence. Following that investigation, the findings will be presented to the Bishop who will determine the appropriateness of a conditional baptism. The persons involved will be informed of the decision.
- If determined to be valid, it should be recorded in the original registry book.

#### **Situation #6:**

##### **Someone comes forth with the initial information that does not provide sufficient information to question the presumption of validity of the baptism.**

- This may happen when the person who comes forward has only hearsay evidence or by their own admission is not convinced of their own recollection of the baptism. Unless another person with direct knowledge of the situation also questions its validity, the baptism will be presumed to be valid and no further action will be taken.

The seal of confession is absolutely inviolable. Therefore, any priest aware of the invalidity of a baptism only by means of the sacrament of Reconciliation cannot reveal this under any circumstances. If a person comes to confession, either for having conducted such a baptism or having witnessed it, the priest may encourage him or her to report the incident outside of confession. If a priest has this knowledge from a previous confession however, he must not contact the person to talk about it.

It is important that any person who comes forward — whether a layperson; priest; or deacon — be made known to the Bishop’s delegate by forwarding the appropriate form that can be found on the [website](#) of the Diocese. Should the person coming forward with such questions prefer to speak with their pastor or a parish staff member, they should be encouraged to do so and advised that the information they provide will be forwarded to the diocese for review. This will help to ensure a uniform response.

The following information is requested from anyone making a report of questionably valid baptisms:

1. Your name (person coming forward):
2. Your relation to the baptized person:
3. Your email address and phone number:
4. Were you actually present, or did you hear about it from someone else?
5. Do you have an audio or video recording or other evidence of the baptism?
6. If you are not the person who was baptized, and if that person is still a minor, may we contact their parents?
7. What was the approximate date and location of the baptism and who performed it?

**Outcomes of the process:**

Once the above information has been provided to the Diocese of Gaylord, it will be possible for us to move forward. We will contact the person to go over the information already provided and to review any evidence they may have. Wherever possible, we will also arrange to speak with the priest or deacon who performed the baptism.

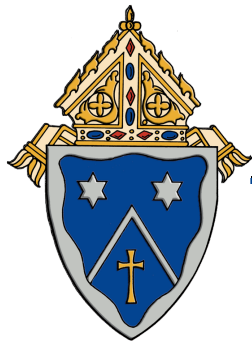
Once established, either by the acknowledgement of the priest or deacon who performed the baptism or baptisms that he used the “We baptize ... ” formula, or by the information gathered, arrangements will be made to baptize the person or persons absolutely and not conditionally.

An annotation will be made in the original baptismal record of the declaration of invalidity and date. Depending on where the new baptism takes place, the recipient will receive either information on where to find the new records, or, if the baptism takes place in the same parish, where the new information will be found.

If it is not possible to make a clear determination, we will see if there is still probable cause for questioning the validity of the baptism. For example, there might be multiple persons who believe that the “We baptize ... ” formula was used or that the priest or deacon might be one whom multiple individuals believe to have used the “We baptize ... ” formula. Following additional review, the findings will be presented to the Bishop so that a determination of the appropriateness of a conditional baptism can be made. The decision of the Bishop will be relayed to the person or persons concerned.

In cases where other sacraments (confirmation) are also required, the priest who celebrates the baptism will be delegated to celebrate them as well.

In cases where it is determined that there is no reason to consider the original baptism invalid, and there is not sufficient reason to perform a conditional baptism, this information will also be provided to the individual so that his or her conscience may be at peace being ever mindful that God’s grace comes to us through the sacraments, but is not limited to the sacraments.



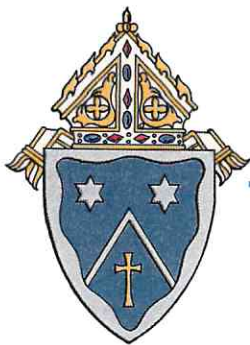
### **Contact Form: Invalid Baptisms**

If you believe that you have experienced or witnessed an invalid baptism, please complete the following form and return to the Diocese of Gaylord for further response.

1. Your name (person coming forward):
2. Your relation to the baptized person:
3. Your email address and phone number:
4. Were you actually present, or did you hear about it from someone else?
5. Do you have an audio or video recording or other evidence of the baptism?
6. If you are not the person who was baptized, and if that person is still a minor, may we contact their parents?
7. What was the approximate date and location of the baptism and who performed it?

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**Upon completion, please email this form to the Diocese of Gaylord at:  
[BaptismInquiry@dioceseofgaylord.org](mailto:BaptismInquiry@dioceseofgaylord.org)**



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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September 3, 2020

Dear Brother Priests and Friends in Christ,

As you may already be aware—possibly as a result of reading my letter of August 27, 2020, “Regarding Baptism”—concerns have surfaced regarding individuals having been baptized using the words “we baptize you” rather than “I baptize you.” The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) has now declared such baptisms invalid and has stated that persons so baptized must be baptized anew using the correct formula in absolute and not conditional terms. This decision has created a pastoral problem which I now wish to address in its historical context.

One important fruit of the Second Vatican Council was a greater understanding of the equal dignity of all the faithful from the most recently baptized to the Holy Father himself. Another was a great re-awakening of the sense—present in the early Church—of the importance of community, and of the Church as a great assembly of the faithful. As a result and in a sincere effort to overcome excessive clericalism, some may have undertaken baptisms in which the word “we” was used.

I have no reason to doubt the sincerity or the good will of those who may have done so without realizing the consequences of such a change in the form of the sacrament. Prior to the recent response of the CDF, which our Holy Father approved, there was no definitive statement that the formula “we baptize you” was invalid. In fact, certain private communications from at least one other Vatican Congregation concluded that baptisms using these words were illicit rather than invalid.

However, since it has been approved by the Pope, the CDF’s declaration takes priority. As the CDF stated, it is not the community that baptizes but the priest, deacon or layperson who administers baptism does so in the person of Christ who baptizes. Notwithstanding the good will of those involved, since any such baptisms have been declared to be invalid, the persons who come forward with established claims must be heard and baptized again.

Whenever we become certain that this occurred, we Church leaders need to make efforts to contact those affected. Our common concern is for the spiritual good of the individuals. For this reason, I hope that any who have performed, been involved in, or received such baptisms will acknowledge having done so. Every effort will be made to handle these cases with great care and, in as much as is possible, with respect for the privacy of all.

Page 1 of 2

To this end, I have asked Father Matthew Furgiuele, to be our point person. In other words, I have appointed him to address these situations and coordinate our diocesan efforts to remedy any situations of deficiency. Father Matthew and I are of the same mind, and so, should you be contacted by him, know that he is concerned for those who may have been invalidly baptized as well as for those who, with the best of intentions, have celebrated baptisms in this way.

I can foresee that there will be cases in which the celebrant of the baptism may have died or may be unreachable and/or unwilling to acknowledge what happened. I can also foresee occasions in which there is no verification by witnesses or by video or audio evidence.

If there is a high probability based on the evidence received that a baptism was celebrated using the “we baptize” formula but it is not possible to conclude with certainty that the celebration was invalid, the possibility of a conditional baptism may be explored for the sake of helping people attain peace of conscience. In these circumstances, I ask that you allow the matter of baptism, whether absolute or conditional, to be coordinated by the Diocese of Gaylord through the good offices of Father Furgiuele.

If you are aware of having celebrated such baptisms using the “we baptize” formula, or if someone in your parish should come to you with concerns about his or her own or a family member’s baptism, please do not undertake the baptism yourself without contacting the diocese through Father Furgiuele. Together we shall arrive at some determination and a path forward. We want to do what will best serve the spiritual needs of our people. We will have protocols and procedures (e.g., a form to fill out) so we can properly record what may have happened and determine a corrective and healing course of action. These protocols will be available next week. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter and God’s blessings on our priestly ministry.

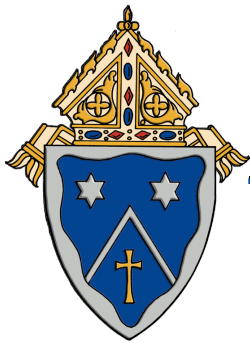
With good wishes,



Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator

(A slightly edited version of this communication will be posted on the website.)





## DIocese of GAYLORD

611 WEST NORTH STREET  
 GAYLORD, MI 49735  
 PHONE: 989.732.5147  
 FAX: 989.705.3589

DATE: August 28, 2020

TO: Priests, Pastoral Administrators, Deacons, Principals, Catholic Institutions

FROM: Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley *+ Walter A. Hurley*

RE: **Election Year 2020 Guidelines and Resources**

### Election Year 2020 Guidelines and Resources

Each election season, there are many questions raised: “How can I familiarize myself with the issues?” “Where can I get reliable Catholic guidance?” “Which candidates most closely conform with Catholic doctrine and teaching?” These are all questions that responsible Catholics should be praying through and considering. *Because of the polarized situation and the significance of the issues involved, great care should be exercised in presenting the issues.*

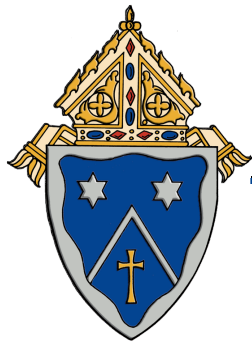
As this election cycle continues to progress, **the following critical guidelines must be observed in our parishes:**

- Priests, deacons, parish staff or parishioners may not publicly endorse or refer to particular candidates when they are acting or speaking on behalf of the Church. This includes before, during, or after the Mass or in parish-sponsored gatherings. Those who may speak on these matters in any parish setting should *speak to issues*, but may not publicly endorse or support specific candidates.
- The distribution of election year materials in any parish setting is prohibited unless published by the diocesan bishop, the Michigan Catholic Conference, or the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- To this end, the following election year materials are permitted, and I strongly encourage you to review and share these resources. These publications directly answer common questions, outline the do’s and don’ts of parish-based activity, and provide voter guides, special prayers and signs:
  - **Parish Resource:** [2020 Election Year Guidelines for Catholic Parishes and Organizations](#) (Also in [Spanish](#))
  - **Parish Resource:** [Do’s and Don’ts Guidelines During Election Season](#)
  - **Individual Voter Resource:** [The Issues, The Candidates, and Your Vote 2020](#)
  - **Individual Voter Resource:** [Faithful Citizenship](#)

The above information can also be found at the [diocesan webpage](#) dedicated to election year guidelines and resources.

This election will have a significant impact on parishioners in our diocese: In addition to local races, voters will cast their ballot for President of the United States, one of Michigan’s two U.S. Senate seats, all 14 seats in the Michigan congressional delegation, two justices for the Michigan Supreme Court, two members of the State Board of Education, and the 110-member Michigan House of Representatives.

We each have a moral obligation to participate in meaningful and edifying dialogue, and to vote in accordance with a well-formed conscience. It seems the political climate grows increasingly contemptible each election cycle, and often the leading weeks become divisive and contentious, unfortunately even in our Catholic communities. However, this is a wonderful opportunity to be reminded that we are called to be a people set apart, a “city on a hill”— and this means that we will act in charity to one another and participate for the common good.



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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### Regarding Baptisms

August 27, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I pray this letter finds you well and enjoying these final weeks before Labor Day, in what has turned out to be a year we won't forget anytime soon. Although these times have been challenging in many ways, I remain grateful for the blessings that the Lord has given us. From simple pleasures like the beautiful weather, to more profound blessings like the relationships with those we love, there is much to be thankful for even when circumstances are less than ideal.

As the Church, one thing we remain grateful for is the immeasurable gift of the sacraments and the grace we receive from our sacramental life. With this in mind, I write today in regards to a recent response from the Vatican regarding the sacrament of baptism. I share the following, both to inform you, as well as to address questions that may arise for you in response.

#### Doctrinal Response on the Validity of Baptism with a Modified Formula

Earlier this month, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a [doctrinal response and commentary](#) regarding the validity of baptisms conferred with a modified formula. This doctrinal note informed the Church that baptisms conferred using a first person *plural* formula are considered invalid through a lack of proper form. This means that baptisms conferred with the form of “*We* baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” and other similar variations (rather than “*I* baptize you ...”) are not valid baptisms.

This clarification from the Vatican reaffirms the truth that in the sacrament of baptism the person of Christ is acting through the minister, not through the assembly. Additionally, this response reminds that no one “even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority,” which was established by the Second Vatican Council.

#### What Does This Mean for You?

After reading this, you may begin to question, “What does this mean for me?” “Is *my* baptism invalid?” “Should I be concerned about this?” As a general rule, the answer is no, unless there is evidence to the contrary. It is appropriate that this reminder should prompt us to reflect and take pause. But this reflection should be in thanksgiving for the gift of grace we receive freely through baptism, and in humility for our continued obedience and reverence in receiving this gift in the manner handed down to us by our Lord and through sacred Tradition. It should not be out of fear or anxiety.

The overwhelming majority of baptisms are valid. Only a small number may be affected by this decree. All sacraments are presumed to be valid unless established to be otherwise. With this in mind, I encourage you *not to doubt* the validity of your baptism without good cause to do so.

Those who may have a recording of their baptism, or other confirmation of the fact, and are concerned should review this in order to verify that the baptism is valid. If this leads to the conclusion that the modified

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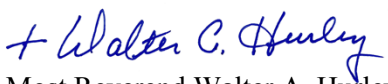
formula was used and the baptism is invalid, contact your parish or the diocese. For the majority of those baptized who do *not* have a recording or other confirmation, again, I urge you not to doubt your baptism's validity if there is no evidence suggesting the contrary.

### **Closing Thoughts**

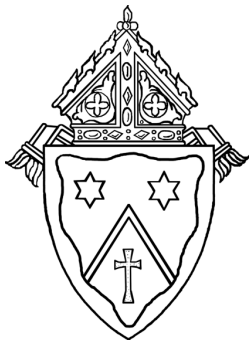
Archbishop Vigneron of the Archdiocese of Detroit recently shared on this same topic, "The Church, following the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, recognizes that God has bound Himself *to* the sacraments, but He is not bound *by* the sacraments." This beautifully articulates that while we consider this matter to be of the utmost importance in our spiritual journey as followers of Christ, we recognize that God's grace extends far beyond what we can comprehend. I am reassured in knowing that God in His infinite love and mercy is not bound by our rules and determinations, as important as they are for the good and salvation of us all.

This letter is not to alarm anyone regarding the validity of their baptism, but rather to give anyone who has concerns the opportunity to address it. It also provides us all with the opportunity to reflect on the great gift that God has given to us in this sacrament.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator



## DIocese OF GAYLORD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 AUGUST 17, 2020

### SUNDAY MASS DISPENSATION EXTENDED

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — Bishop Walter Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, has announced the extension of the dispensation for all Catholics within the Diocese of Gaylord from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass through and including the feast of Christ the King, Sunday, November 22, 2020. The granting of this dispensation is not to discourage those who are able to attend Sunday Mass from doing so, but rather to enable so that anyone who needs to stay at home to protect the common good (their own or that of others) can do so confidently and in good conscience.

The protocols for Mass that have been established during this pandemic for the well-being and safety of all remain in place for parishes within the Diocese of Gaylord, namely: the required use of masks; limited singing; social distancing; cleansing of the churches according to CDC guidelines; as well as a congregation that does not exceed 25% of the capacity of the church.

“All are asked to carefully observe these protocols because we care for each other and love each other as the Lord has called us to,” said Bishop Hurley. “The celebration of the Eucharist/Sunday Mass should be at the very core of our faith life, and we are all called to keep holy the Lord’s day. We must each seek to find time for prayer and spiritual Communion with the Lord, even if we cannot be present for the celebration of Eucharist.

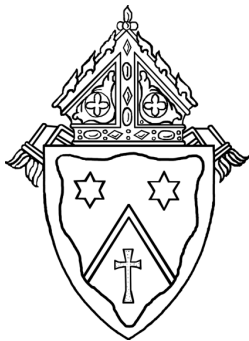
“Please continue to pray with me for consolation and relief from the pandemic. May we look forward to the First Sunday of Advent, on November 29, with fervent hope that we may be able to return to Mass together at that time.”

- END -

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Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Dispensation Extension

Media Contact: Mrs. Mackenzie Ritchie, Director of Communications / [mritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org](mailto:mritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org) / 989.705.3506



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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August 12, 2020

Dear Priests, Pastoral Administrators, Directors of Parish Religious Education, and Principals:

One of the great missions of the Church is the work of evangelization, especially to children and youth. During this unprecedented pandemic, we must use this time wisely to help our young people strengthen their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for the work that you are doing and for your continued efforts, as you are truly on the front lines of teaching and your work is extremely important to the mission of the Church! We must continue walking alongside our young people in this journey, as we are a family – and a family helps each other grow in the faith. During this time, parents may be fearful of sending their children to faith formation, and even sacramental preparation, and they will need the faith *brought to them* in new and creative ways.

Bearing this in mind, please find below the **guidelines for parish religious education**:

### CURRICULUM

- Any material on the USCCB's [Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series](#) can be used for faith formation and all sacramental preparation, including marriage preparation.
- The diocese must approve all other material not on the Conformity Listing before being used.
- All materials (i.e. books and online resources) are to be ordered by the parish. **Please note:** Material orders that have been placed, to date, utilizing the "2021 Parish Ordering Booklet" will be coordinated/fulfilled by the diocesan staff. For orders that have not yet been placed, materials should be ordered by the parish.
- Teaching methods should be adapted to assist parents with at-home teaching.

### SCREENING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

Classes may be held in person if the following guidelines are put in place:

- All volunteers should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms are present, they should not attend in person.
- Parents should monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms are present, children should not attend in person.
- Drop-off and pick-up procedures need to be established in order to maintain social distancing.
- Each student needs to provide his/her own supplies. The parish should help those parents who cannot provide these supplies for their children.
- Social distancing (maintaining six feet) must be observed while having in-person classes.
- Masks must be worn while in the hallways. Parishes must provide masks for those who do not have one.
- Hand sanitizer must be provided.
- If necessary, multiple classes may need to be offered each week to ensure that classroom size does not exceed the 10 person capacity. **Please note:** School guidelines fall in a different classification in the Executive Orders.
- All surfaces must be sanitized after every class.

Again, I applaud you in your work of evangelization during this time. I remain in prayer with you all.

In Our Lady of Perpetual Help,

Rev. Nicholas J. Cooper  
 Interim Director of Faith Formation

July 29, 2020

As this time of pandemic continues to unfold, we remain attentive to the safety and well-being of all who enter our churches to pray and participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We recognize that during this unprecedented season of the Church, all are called to make sacrifices that are uncomfortable and out of the ordinary. *We do this in charity for one another*, despite the difficulty and challenges it may bring. Bearing this in mind, these reminders are shared to help and assist you and your parish leaders to continue to maintain proper safeguards to protect the health of our assemblies and others whom they will encounter. These reminders follow the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) through resources prepared by members of the Thomistic Institute of the Dominican House in Washington DC and the Federation of Liturgical Commissions (FDLC).

### **MASKS**

Wearing a mask is one act of charity we do to protect others. **Masks continue to be required for everyone in the Church, except children under the age of five, those with medical conditions and the ministers when in the sanctuary.** Members of the assembly who refuse to wear masks should be invited to sit in a designated area.

### **MUSIC AND SINGING DURING MASS**

Refraining from singing is also to protect those around us. Therefore, **we need to ask our assemblies to not sing during Mass to reduce spreading airborne particles (even while wearing masks).**

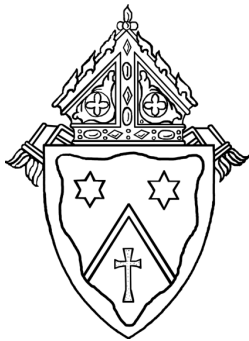
What does this look like during the Mass?

- The only singing is to be by the musician or cantor, who may sing the Entrance Antiphon and the Communion Antiphon.
- The Gloria, Psalm responses, Holy Holy, Mystery of Faith, Great Amen and Lamb of God should all be spoken. The celebrant/presider should also recite the prayers of the Mass.
- Instrumental music may be used during the Preparation of the Altar, Communion and Recessional.

### **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

When using extraordinary ministers, the last action they should take before being handed the ciborium is to sanitize their hands. The sanitizing must occur *after* they have received communion and put their masks back in place.

I recognize how difficult these protocols are, but cannot stress enough the critical task set before us to make sacrifices out of charity for one another. Thank you for your continued efforts and for your leadership to your people.



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — JULY 23, 2020

### NOTIFICATION OF SECURITY INCIDENT WITH THIRD-PARTY DATABASE PROVIDER

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — On July 16, 2020, the Diocese of Gaylord was notified by one of its third-party database service providers, Blackbaud, of a database access security incident. Specifically, Blackbaud reported that they became aware of and — together with independent forensics experts and law enforcement — stopped a ransomware attack in May 2020. In ransomware attacks, cybercriminals attempt to disrupt businesses by locking them out of their own data and servers.

#### DATA INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT

The Diocese of Gaylord uses Blackbaud's database and accounting products "Raiser's Edge" and "Financial Edge" for communication, stewardship and accounting. These diocesan databases do not store bank account information, but include encrypted/redacted credit card information and social security numbers if voluntarily provided. With regard to the aforementioned security incident, **Blackbaud reported that the cybercriminal did NOT access any bank account information, credit card information or social security numbers contained within affected databases.**

However, Blackbaud informed the Diocese of Gaylord and other affected organizations that prior to locking the cybercriminal out, the cybercriminal was able to remove a copy of affected organizations' backup files containing constituents' personal information. Blackbaud has determined that the file the cybercriminal removed may have contained contact information, demographic information and a relationship history with the organization, such as donation dates and amounts. Blackbaud reported that it paid the cybercriminal's ransomware demand upon confirmation that **the backup files the cybercriminal removed were destroyed.**

#### ACTIONS TAKEN

Upon becoming aware of the breach, Blackbaud's teams quickly identified the vulnerability associated with this incident, including the tactics used by the cybercriminal, and took swift action to correct it. Blackbaud reports that they have confirmed through testing by multiple third parties, including the appropriate platform vendors, that their corrective actions will withstand similar attacks in the future. Additionally, they are accelerating efforts to further strengthen their environment through enhancements to access management, network segmentation, deployment of additional endpoint and network-based platforms.

Upon being notified, the Diocese of Gaylord spoke with Blackbaud representatives to better understand what had occurred; reanalyzed the contents of the affected diocesan databases; and considered any risks to constituents for whom information is contained in these diocesan databases.

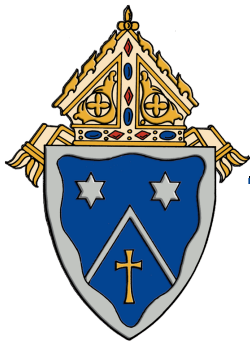
#### WHAT CONSTITUENTS CAN DO

Due to bank account information, credit card information and social security numbers **not** being accessed in this security incident, **Blackbaud reports that there is no action necessary for constituents.** However, out of an abundance of caution, the Diocese of Gaylord will mail a notice to constituents for whom information is contained in their affected databases. For any further questions, constituents may contact the diocese at 989.732.5147.

###

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**DIocese of GAYLORD**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JULY 20, 2020

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — On Sunday, July 19, we received word of significant damage to Bishop Baraga School (Cheboygan) as a result of that morning's severe storms. Bishop Walter Hurley and Frank Sander, Superintendent, have been in contact with Bishop Baraga staff to continue evaluating the damage and move forward with next steps.

The initial assessment reveals that major damage occurred to the entire building, either by destroyed roof, walls or water. All utilities are currently turned off to the building, and no one is allowed inside at the current time. A message was shared by Fr. Duane Wachowiak, Pastor, and Kitty LaBlance, Principal, with the families of the Bishop Baraga School on Sunday, informing of the damage and directing all school phone calls to the parish office at 231-627-2105.

Bishop Hurley stated: "My prayers are with all at the parishes in Cheboygan and Bishop Baraga School. I am saddened to see the extensive damage caused by the storm. This is both disappointing and challenging for the school community as they continue preparing for the start of a new academic year, one which already will have unique challenges due to the pandemic. However, I am grateful to our Lord that school was not yet in session when this happened and that all were kept safe. We will continue to support the staff, faculty and families as plans for the start of the school year continue and facility restoration begins."

As plans for repairs and the start of the academic year continue to be made, further information will be made available. Please join in prayer, both in thanksgiving that no one was injured and for all involved during the next steps.

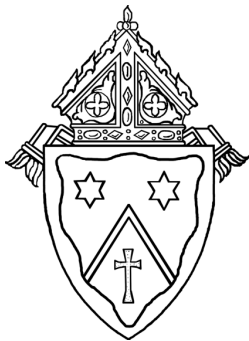
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*Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Storm Damage to Bishop Baraga School, Cheboygan*

*Media Contact: Mrs. Mackenzie Ritchie, Director of Communications / [mr Ritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org](mailto:mr Ritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org) / 989.705.3506*





## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JULY 17, 2020

### DIOCESE OF GAYLORD'S STATEMENT REGARDING DAVID HAAS, CATHOLIC COMPOSER

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis recently released statements regarding reports of inappropriate conduct by David Haas, Catholic composer. With the following statements, Archbishop Bernard Hebda shared corresponding courses of action to be taken within the Archdiocese:

*[Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: Statement Regarding David Haas / June 16](#)*

*[Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: Additional Statement Regarding David Haas / July 8](#)*

In the Diocese of Gaylord, we too must remain steadfast in our response to such matters. It is our responsibility to provide support and aid to the victims of abuse and misconduct. Mindful of this, **the following similar courses of action will be taken within the Diocese of Gaylord** in response to the reports of inappropriate conduct by David Haas:

- The Diocese of Gaylord will not use David Haas' musical compositions at diocesan Masses and other diocesan events.
- Pastors, principals and leaders of other Catholic institutions should consider the sensitivities involved with using Haas' music in liturgies or other parish or school events, and take appropriate steps to fully support those who have been harmed by sexual assault or abuse.
- Haas may not give presentations at workshops, concerts, or similar events hosted by the Diocese of Gaylord, parishes, Catholic schools, or other Catholic institutions in the diocese.

For information on how to report allegations of abuse or misconduct within the Diocese of Gaylord, visit:  
<http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org/how-to-make-a-report-212/>

- MORE -

**The recent statements from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis are available online and reprinted below for ease of reference:**

**Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: Statement Regarding David Haas**

June 16, 2020

*From Tim O'Malley, Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment:*

*As stated in a June 14, 2020 response to Catholic News Agency, in 2018 the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis received two reports from another diocese that David Haas acted inappropriately with two adult women at an event in another state. Both women complained that Haas' conduct made them feel uncomfortable. The Archdiocese had received an earlier complaint, in 1987, that Haas had made unwanted sexual advances toward a young adult woman. In each instance, Haas denied that he engaged in inappropriate conduct. After receiving the 2018 complaint, the Archdiocese informed Haas that it would not provide a letter of recommendation that Haas had requested. Furthermore, we informed Haas that he was not allowed to provide services at Catholic institutions in the Archdiocese without disclosure of these complaints. Unless we receive other information, we will continue this course of action.*

*The Haas matter illustrates the challenges of responding to allegations of inappropriate behavior by lay persons who work with Catholic groups, especially when they are self-employed. We are committed to supporting anyone who has been harmed by persons of influence, prominence or power in our communities. At the same time, we recognize the importance of having a fair and appropriate forum that provides due process for those who have been accused.*

*However, the complaints about Haas are particularly concerning since they involve offenses against the dignity of the human person and are alleged to have occurred at Catholic events. We are committed to safe environments for all. We offer our support for those who have been harmed to come forward.*

*As always, we encourage those who have information of possible criminal behavior to report that to law enforcement. If you have concerns about improper conduct at a parish or school in the Archdiocese, please report that to the parish, school or to the Archdiocese. I may be contacted at [omalleyt@archspm.org](mailto:omalleyt@archspm.org) or 651-290-1618. The Archdiocesan ombudsperson, Victoria Johnson, may also be contacted to provide assistance in making a report. Johnson can be contacted directly at [victorianewcomejohnson@gmail.com](mailto:victorianewcomejohnson@gmail.com) or 612-990-0022. The ombudsperson acts as an outside resource for individuals having questions or concerns about clerical sexual abuse or other misconduct within the Archdiocese, and is entirely independent of the Archdiocese.*

- MORE -

**Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: Additional Statement Regarding David Haas**

July 8, 2020

*From Tim O'Malley, Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment:*

*Since my [June 16, 2020 statement](#), the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis has received additional reports from women in different parts of the country alleging that David Haas engaged in inappropriate conduct with them in the 1980s, when the women were young adults. The conduct described in these new, independent reports is similar in nature to the conduct described in previous allegations. Haas has denied any wrongdoing.*

*We are sharing this information in the interest of accountability and transparency and believe that it may assist others, as it has assisted us, in making informed decisions. Survivors of sexual harassment and abuse deserve support and understanding. Indeed, our community as a whole has suffered much from those who have used positions of power or privilege to harm others. We have a responsibility to be mindful of this and do what we can to prevent further injury to those who have already suffered harm.*

*Therefore, Archbishop Hebda has decided that David Haas may not give presentations at workshops, concerts, or similar events hosted by the Archdiocese, parishes, Catholic schools, or other Catholic institutions in the Archdiocese. Likewise, the Archdiocese will not use Haas' compositions at Archdiocesan Masses and other Archdiocesan events. Also, the Archbishop has encouraged pastors, principals, and leaders of other Catholic institutions to consider the sensitivities involved with using Haas' music in liturgies or other parish or school events, and to take appropriate steps to fully support those who have been harmed by sexual assault or abuse.*

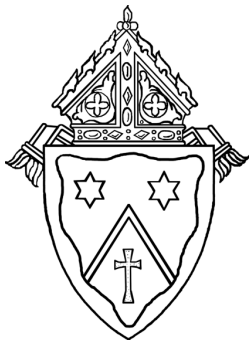
*The Archdiocese stands by its commitment to promote and maintain safe environments. Everyone deserves to be free from sexual harassment and abuse. If you have information of possible criminal behavior, we encourage you to contact law enforcement. If you have concerns about improper conduct at a parish or school, please report those concerns to the parish, school, or the Archdiocese. I may be contacted at [omalleyt@archspm.org](mailto:omalleyt@archspm.org) or 651-290-1618. The Archdiocesan ombudsperson, Victoria Johnson, may also be contacted to provide assistance in making a report. Johnson can be contacted directly at [victorianewcomejohnson@gmail.com](mailto:victorianewcomejohnson@gmail.com) or 612-990-0022. The ombudsperson acts as an outside resource for individuals having questions or concerns about clerical sexual abuse or other misconduct within the Archdiocese, and is entirely independent of the Archdiocese.*

- END -

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*Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, David Haas, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis*

*Media Contact: Ms. Mackenzie Ritchie, Manager of Communications / [mritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org](mailto:mritchie@dioceseofgaylord.org) / 989.732.5147*



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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### DIOCESE OF GAYLORD'S RESPONSE TO FINANCIAL CHALLENGES OF PARISHES AND SCHOOLS JULY 10, 2020 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — In support of our parishes and parish life, and in continued preparation for a safe return to school this fall, the Diocese of Gaylord has looked to provide relief and response to the financial challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic as we are able. Bishop Walter Hurley, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, shared in a statement:

*“The past few months have been challenging, but our faith reassures us that Christ can calm even the most daunting of storms. This reminds us that through His strength, our mission as Catholics remains to be a beacon of hope amidst conditions that are ever-changing. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly caused unexpected change to financial circumstances, and it is critical that this not be a roadblock for our parishes and schools to serve the faithful and our students. We are preparing to safely open our schools this fall and the financial relief and response efforts in our diocese — particularly the tuition assistance to our schools — will help families continue to receive a Catholic education for their children. We are working with the pastors, principals, staff and faculty to safeguard the health and safety of our young people and those that serve them, in both our schools and in our religious education programs.”*

- The Catholic Services Appeal target was reduced by 20% for all parishes for the fiscal year 2020-21.
- The priests' Sabbatical Fund support, totaling \$30,000, was not billed to parishes as is typically done each May.
- The Seminarian Education Fund Collection, typically taken up in August, will not take place this year.
- The Bishop's Golf Outing for the Seminararians, typically held in August, will not take place this year.
- \$300,000 in tuition assistance from the diocese has been approved for disbursement to our Catholic Schools. This special aid for the 2020-21 school year will be used to assist returning and new families whose tuition needs may be greater this year. This tuition assistance was given to each school to help “fill the gap” between the amount of tuition aid they awarded in the recently completed academic year and the estimated tuition assistance they will award in the upcoming academic year. The following grants for this purpose have been made to the parishes/schools to date:
  - All Saints, Alpena: \$6,000
  - Bishop Baraga, Cheboygan: \$23,000
  - Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools, Traverse City: \$130,000
  - Holy Family, East Tawas: \$7,500
  - Manistee Catholic Central, Manistee: \$20,000
  - Our Lady of the Lake, Prudenville: \$3,000
  - St. Ann, Cadillac: \$6,000
  - St. Francis, Petoskey: \$10,000
  - St. Ignatius of Loyola, Rogers City: \$3,500
  - St. Joseph, West Branch: \$3,500
  - St. Mary Cathedral School, Gaylord: \$24,000
  - St. Mary-Hannah School, Kingsley: \$1,500
  - St. Mary, Charlevoix: \$5,500
  - St. Mary, Lake Leelanau: \$10,000

- MORE -

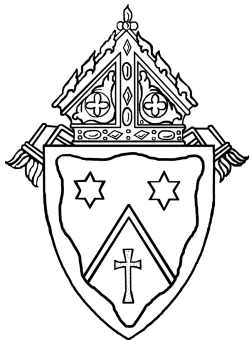
Additionally providing relief within our diocese, the Northern Michigan Catholic Foundation (NMCF) recently awarded a total of \$22,750 to parishes and Catholic Schools in northern Michigan. Grants were made possible through the NMCF Cornerstone Fund and the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund.

- END -

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Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Financial Response, Financial Relief, COVID-19 Relief, Tuition Assistance.

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## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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July 3, 2020

Dear Friends:

It is with a sense of joy and peace that I find myself with you here, embarking on a journey in the most northern region (of the lower peninsula) of the state that I have been blessed to call home for many years. You are likely aware by now that I have been appointed as the apostolic administrator of this diocese during this season of transition — I want you to know that I feel very honored to serve you alongside my brother priests here, particularly, as I have expressed to them, during these troublesome and challenging days. I look forward to serving in the Diocese of Gaylord and am grateful for the warm welcome I have received in the short time I have been here. The hospitality and generosity have been overwhelming, a true reflection of the love our Lord asks us to pour out on neighbor!

In this time between bishops, I want you to know of my hope and desire to be a source of support to your priests in their ministries, and to you, in any way possible. To that end, I met informally yesterday with the priests consultors over lunch, and I want to share with you some reflections on their thoughts and suggestions to me.

### **CARING FOR EACH OTHER**

In these unprecedented times, I recognize the sacrifices everyone has made and the extra challenges our priests and clergy face in providing pastoral care to their “flock.” As demanding as it is to remain vigilant in observing the health protocols and safety measures in our parishes, it is critical that we must continue, together, to do so in order to protect and safeguard the health of others.

After discussion with the consultors regarding the safety issues associated with returning to public Mass, there seems to be a lack of clarity of the protocols and expectations for attending Mass on Sunday and other days. The consultors strongly feel it is important to clarify, *prior to this Sunday*:

- The use of masks is expected in our parish churches.
- Social distancing should be the norm in our parishes and at parish and diocesan events.

The consultors and I feel that it is very important to take these measures for the safety and well-being of all, particularly given the large number of visitors in this diocese. These safety measures are also the strong recommendation of the medical professionals. A number of priests and bishops in other dioceses have contracted COVID-19, as well as individuals in our own diocese. Among those who have contracted the coronavirus is Archbishop Gregory Aymond, the Archbishop of New Orleans, who has written a very powerful article on this matter that is worthy of our reflection: <https://clarionherald.org/news/wearing-a-mask-displays-true-love-of-neighbor>. Bearing all this in mind, *I am requesting that you continue to wear a mask when you attend Mass, so long as you are medically able to do so.*

### **MUSIC**

Because the CDC has indicated COVID-19 is spread *orally* by water droplets, I encourage singing be done by the music directors and cantors during this time. Robust singing by the congregation should be very minimal, if at all.

July 3, 2020  
Page 2 of 2

**SEMINARIAN FUND COLLECTION**

These have been challenging times for the parishes financially, amplified by the recent kickoff of the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). After discussing the matter with the consultants, we will not have the Seminarian Collection this year (August) so that you can continue, to the extent that you are able, your support to your parish and the CSA. If you are able to make a contribution to the seminarian fund, it will gladly be accepted of course! Your parish will forward these gifts to the diocesan office.

**DIOCESAN OFFICE REOPENING**

The Diocesan Pastoral Center will reopen on Monday, July 6, with staff returning to the office. Visitors are expected to wear masks.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

As the Apostolic Administrator, you might note that, beginning this weekend, my name is included in the Eucharistic prayer — I am grateful for your prayers and your support.

I look forward to making visits to your parishes, visiting in the upcoming weekends throughout the remaining time that I am with you. Each parish community is a unique family whose differences are unified by our commonality as children of God, and it will be a joy for me to meet you and witness the special vibrancy of your church. I will be at the Cathedral this Saturday evening, at St. Mary/St. Charles this Sunday, and I will continue to visit parishes each weekend thereafter. Please know that no special arrangements need be made other than the usual arrangements for Mass.

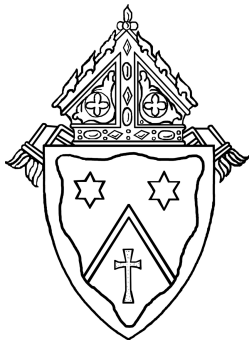
I am grateful to be here with you and look forward to all that God has in store. With thanksgiving, may we keep our eyes fixed on our Lord during this season of transition, recalling that He is the unchanging and immovable anchor of our soul.

God bless, and stay tuned!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator of Gaylord



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 JUNE 23, 2020

### **Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley Appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN – His Holiness Pope Francis has appointed the Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley, Bishop Emeritus of Grand Rapids, as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, effective immediately. As the newly appointed apostolic administrator, Bishop Hurley will serve as the provisional shepherd by addressing the spiritual needs and governing the diocese during this time of transition until the installation of the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord.

Bishop Hurley was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit in 1965 and was ordained the 22nd auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit in 2003. He continued to serve in the Archdiocese until 2005, when he was installed as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids. He served as Bishop of Grand Rapids for nearly eight years, until his retirement in 2013. From his leadership of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Bishop Hurley is well known for his work with Catholic Charities West Michigan, for establishing FAITH Grand Rapids magazine, and orchestrating the development and construction of Cathedral Square in Grand Rapids.

Following his retirement, Bishop Hurley returned to the Archdiocese of Detroit assisting with work in the chancery and at parishes. In October 2018, Bishop Hurley was appointed apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Saginaw following the sudden death of Most Reverend Joseph Cistone, bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw. Bishop Hurley served the Diocese of Saginaw until the installation of Bishop Robert Gruss in July 2019. For Bishop Hurley's full biography, please visit [www.dioceseofgaylord.org](http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org).

Bishop Hurley's appointment is subsequent to today's installation of the Most Reverend Steven J Raica, who has served as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord since 2014, as the new bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.

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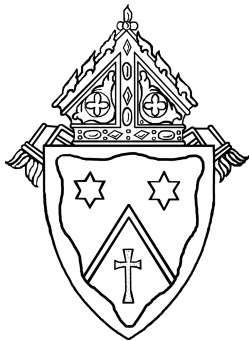
*The Diocese of Gaylord was established by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on July 20, 1971. The territory encompasses 11,171 square miles and includes the 21 most northern counties of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The region is home to nearly 50,000 Catholics, served by 75 parishes, 17 Catholic schools and many closely-related institutions. For more information, visit [www.dioceseofgaylord.org](http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org).*

**Keywords:** Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Gaylord, Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Bishop Steven J. Raica, apostolic administrator.

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## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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### A Call to Dialogue and Solidarity June 5, 2020

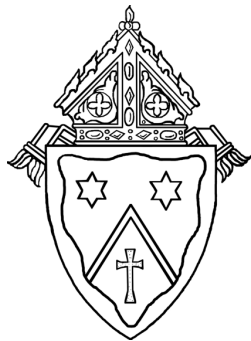
"I can't breathe!" This desperate plea from George Floyd makes me shudder. The callous and reprehensible disregard for human life by a police officer, without the intervention of three other agents present, begs for answers and justice. Like you, I watched with utter horror the events which unfolded in Minneapolis on Memorial Day. The public displays of grief and anguish in the streets of our cities that have sprung up in the aftermath of this event remind us just how fragile true peace, and the justice that leads to it, really is. While our hearts cry for meaning, we also remember that God created us to thirst for life, and to seek love of neighbor that respects the dignity of every human being. In reality, the indications of that respect and love at times seem to be paper thin.

When the cause of peace and justice is marred by violence and racism (a sin whose effects are mortal), we are not making a step forward but backward. A Christian's response has always been to engage in dialogue, to call one another to a higher standard of unity, to see in one another the noble image and likeness of God deserving honor and respect, and then to exhibit that honor and respect. Living as a Christian means: We must think differently; act differently; love differently. Violence only divides. It has no place in genuine human discourse. Christ's response to injustice and hate is counter-cultural to violence: forgive, show mercy, and love unconditionally. So must we.

The exhibitions of hate toward neighbor and the wanton destruction of our neighbor's property dishonor the memory of George Floyd. They distract us from the real conversation that must be had to take the hard steps toward a more just, respectful and free society. The claim of Fr Luigi Giussani remains true: "The forces that change history are the same as those that change the human heart." Violence, chaos and mayhem do not change hearts. Hearts become hardened so we become deaf to the cries of another's pain. All that is noble, good, true and just in humanity is part of every human heart and the beginning of every constructive conversation. So, our challenge is to devise, foster and partake in these conversations.

Having recently celebrated the Solemnity of Pentecost, it is timely that we implore the Holy Spirit once again, the very breath of life, to breathe a renewal over the face of the earth.

Most Reverend Steven J Raica  
 Bishop of Gaylord



## DIocese of GAYLORD

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March 25, 2020  
 Solemnity of the Annunciation

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Gaylord:

Today, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, we remember Mary's "*Fiat!*" or "Let it be done to me as you say!" to the announcement from the Archangel Gabriel to her that she would conceive and bear a son. With this in my heart, it is with both gratitude and anticipation that I share that earlier today our Holy Father announced my upcoming transfer to the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama. There I will be humbled to serve as the fifth Bishop of Birmingham. Like the witness of our Lady, and with devotion to her, I too say, "*Fiat!*" It is my "yes" to the Lord's call at this moment.

While this announcement comes in these unprecedented times, I know that God has a beautiful plan that continues to unfold for the Diocese of Gaylord. Be assured, even after my transfer, I will continue to share in your triumphs and challenges from afar, ardently praying for each of you in your journeys of faith.

I want you to know that I have treasured every moment of ministry with you. Each bishop who has served here in the Diocese of Gaylord has spoken about the vibrant people of the diocese with admiration and esteem — I too cherish each of you. The mosaic of your unique gifts and talents, outpouring of charity for one other, and above all, your love for the Lord has made a tremendous impact on me. I will sincerely miss you and always remember my service here with thanksgiving and gladness.

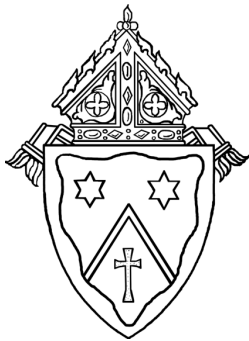
I would also be remiss if I did not say that it has been a joy to serve with my brother priests, sisters, and colleagues in ministry. Their collaboration and steadfast witness for the mission of Christ and His Church has been an extraordinary gift to me. Their dedication and zeal to the mission of Christ here in the diocese is unparalleled, and I will miss each of them.

I appreciate that this announcement of my transition may leave questions for you, such as: Who will lead our flock here? When will this transfer take place? To announce that I am being transferred right now might lead one to think there is an abandonment. While a Bishop normally transitions to a new diocese within two months, I have asked that I will remain here for an additional month. Therefore, the Mass of installation is currently scheduled in Birmingham at the Cathedral of St. Paul on Tuesday, June 23, 2020.

Let me close for today by saying that it is most important to seize this moment in prayer, asking that the Lord continue to guide and bless all those in the Diocese of Gaylord and in the Diocese of Birmingham. Today on this Solemnity of the Annunciation, Pope Francis invites each of us to accompany him and our brothers and sisters around the world in praying an Our Father. I cannot image a better way to begin this time of transition. As we entrust our hearts to the Lord together today, know that you are in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Steven J Raica  
 Bishop of Gaylord



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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March 17, 2020

Dear Brother Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Administrators, Religious and Faithful:

In a world that is darkened by the pain of sin — particularly the devastating effects of sexual sin — we are reminded that, through our relationship with Jesus Christ, light can still break into the darkest valleys of our lives. This beautiful truth is expressed in Jesus’ calling to each of us in the Gospel of Matthew: “You are the light of the world,” or “Vos estis lux mundi.” Pope Francis has reminded us to respond to this call of Jesus, and to shine forth by remaining relentless in our rejection of sin, our accountability, and bringing healing and hope to those who are suffering.

This week, the Holy Father’s Apostolic Letter, *Vos estis lux mundi* (VELM), becomes operational and online. VELM establishes the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service “CBAR,” allowing any individual to relay to Church authorities abuse perpetrated by any U.S. Catholic bishop (or Eastern Rite eparchy). As I have affirmed in the past, we share a collective mission to prevent all abuse and defend the dignity of the human person, to respond with compassion to victims when abuse occurs, and to ensure offenders are properly prosecuted. The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service is a continued step to stamp out the evil of sexual sin.

VELM strengthens the mission of the church to urge one to pursue holiness of life. In the opening lines of this Letter, Pope Francis noted: “Our Lord Jesus Christ calls every believer to be a shining example of virtue, integrity and holiness. All of us, in fact, are called to give concrete witness of faith in Christ in our lives and, in particular, in our relationship with others.” How true it is for Christians to be the people they say they are. This is even more true for a priest and a bishop.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service is another tool that allows victims to pursue a remedy within the Church, while underscoring the critical role that law enforcement authorities have in addressing the potential criminal aspects for the sake of the common good. All victims, and the accused, deserve our best effort in bringing justice, hope, and reconciliation, and I welcome this next step. It strengthens our mission as Christians and provides a practical vehicle for victims to address wrongs.

Please see the attached resources for more information, and be encouraged: “Vos estis lux mundi.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Steven J Raica  
 Bishop of Gaylord

# Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service Resources

Any potential criminal misconduct, such as sexual abuse of a minor, should always be reported to local law enforcement. In addition, the **Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service, or CBAR**, has been established to receive **reports of sexual abuse and related misconduct by bishops**. To make a CBAR report:

**ReportBishopAbuse.org**

**or (800) 276-1562**



If you have any other kind of complaint about a bishop—such as parish assignments, church closings, or homily contents—please address those directly to the Diocese of Gaylord at (989) 732-5147.

Sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, staff member or volunteer of the Church should be reported to law enforcement and to the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Gaylord; *not to CBAR*. To be sure you get the help you need, phone numbers and addresses may be found at <http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org/how-to-make-a-report-212/>

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERVICE?

The purpose of the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting (CBAR) service is to provide a third-party service for gathering and relaying to appropriate Church authorities reports of the following kinds of misconduct:

- A U.S. Catholic bishop who has:
  - forced someone to perform or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority;
  - performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person;
  - produced, exhibited, possessed, or distributed child pornography, or recruited or induced a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions;
- or, a U.S. diocesan or eparchial bishop, or other cleric overseeing a diocese/eparchy in the absence of a diocesan or eparchial bishop, who, in the exercise of their office, intentionally interfered with a civil or Church investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by another cleric or religious.

## WHAT KINDS OF REPORTS SHOULD NOT BE MADE THROUGH THIS SERVICE?

All other complaints against bishops, such as theological concerns, liturgical abuses, church closings, priest assignments, etc., are beyond the scope of this reporting service. Such complaints *should not* be made through this reporting service.

If you wish to report, to the Church, sexual abuse or misconduct by other clergy or Church personnel

other than a bishop, please contact the Diocese of Gaylord's Victim Assistance Coordinator, Larry LaCross, at (989) 705-9010, instead. For more information, consult <http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org/how-to-make-a-report-212/>.

Although Church authorities who receive reports of the sexual abuse of a minor and certain other crimes will report them to civil authorities as required by law, this service is not intended as a substitute for calling the police. If you feel that you are the victim of a crime, please contact local law enforcement immediately.

## WILL THIS SERVICE RESPECT MY PRIVACY?

Although reports made through this service will be routed to appropriate Church personnel and, as warranted, civil authorities for investigation purposes, the reports will otherwise be kept confidential. You are not required to provide your name or contact information, although you may choose to do so to facilitate the investigative process. Any data submitted will be protected through enhanced encryption.

## WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A REPORT?

Your report must include:

- the name of the U.S. Catholic bishop you are reporting;
- a description of the allegation, the place where it occurred, and the timeframe of when it occurred, as best you can remember.

It will be helpful if the report also includes as many relevant details as possible, such as the names of other individuals involved, as well as dates, times, known circumstances, or other information useful to assess the facts of the situation.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO A REPORT ONCE IT IS SUBMITTED?

- You will be given an access number and personal password that can be used to follow-up on the status of your report. The service can provide automated status reports at a very general level, but it can also provide a confidential avenue of communication for asking more detailed questions about status.
- Your report will be forwarded to the proper Church authority, usually a Metropolitan archbishop (or a Senior Suffragan bishop if the report is about the Metropolitan, or if the Metropolitan See is vacant). All of the information you provide will be forwarded without any editing or revisions.
- At the same time, your report will be forwarded to a lay person who has been designated to assist the bishop in receiving reports.
- Reports involving potential crimes, such as those involving minors, will be reported to law enforcement.
- The Metropolitan (or Senior Suffragan) and designated lay person will review the report.
- The Metropolitan will then send your report to the Apostolic Nuncio along with an initial assessment.
- The Apostolic Nuncio will then send your report and the Metropolitan's initial assessment to the appropriate authority within the Holy See.
- Within thirty days, the Holy See will determine if a formal investigation is warranted. If so, it will authorize a bishop to oversee the investigation.
- If an investigation is ordered, it will be undertaken by qualified experts, including lay persons. Normally, the investigation is to be completed within 90 days of receiving the order from the Holy See.
- Once the Holy See receives the conclusions of the investigation, the Holy See will initiate the appropriate process that will lead to a final judgment.

## WHO IS PROVIDING THIS SERVICE?

This third-party reporting system is provided by Convercent, Inc., which is a commercial vendor of ethics reporting services and has no authority within the Catholic Church. The service reflects Convercent's standard design for confidentially receiving and relaying reports, additionally tailored to fit the requirements of Church law. The service is paid for by the 197 dioceses and eparchies of the United States. The service is operated by the Metropolitan archbishops and Senior Suffragan bishops of each province, with the assistance of the designated lay people corresponding to each.

## WHO INVESTIGATES THE REPORTS ENTERED INTO THIS SERVICE?

Neither Convercent nor the third-party system conducts any investigation. Instead, the system only gathers and routes reports to the appropriate Church officials in a manner consistent with canon law, so that they in turn can be investigated. Only those Church officials delegated with authority by the Holy See can conduct a Church investigation of a bishop. Reports involving potential crimes, such as those of sexual abuse of a minor, will be conveyed to civil authorities as well. In those cases, Church officials will suspend any canonical action in deference to any investigation being conducted by civil authorities until their investigation is complete.

## WHICH BISHOPS ARE COVERED BY THIS SERVICE?

This reporting service may be used to report the actions or inactions of living U.S. Catholic bishops, whether active or retired, of U.S. dioceses or eparchies. This includes the Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter and bishops of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, and current diocesan and apostolic administrators of vacant U.S. sees.

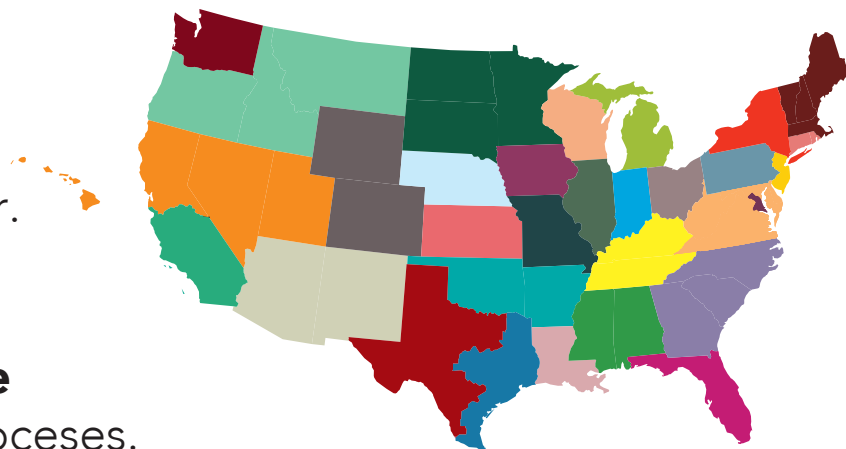
# Who Is a Metropolitan?

The Catholic Church in the United States has **32 provinces**.



Each province is made up of **dioceses** that are grouped together.

A province has one **archdiocese** plus one or more dioceses.



The other dioceses in the province are referred to as **suffragan dioceses**.

The archbishop of the archdiocese, also known as the **metropolitan**, presides over the province.

With the **new law** set down in *Vos estis lux mundi*, a metropolitan may be authorized by the Holy See to undertake responsibilities for investigating reports involving bishops pertaining to sexual abuse in the Church.

Note: This explanation does not pertain to Eastern Catholic Churches in the United States.