



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 9, 2026

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

For the past three years our diocese has been on a journey of renewal that has focused on setting hearts on fire with God's love. This process has primarily been parish focused with an emphasis on supporting pastors in their leadership role.

Through these positive experiences and with the contribution of experts in parish renewal, we have been able to create this pastoral plan for the entire diocese. It captures what we have already been doing and sets forth a vision for the future.

It is a hope-filled document that emphasizes that Jesus is 'light from light' and this is seen in the fire of His love that dispels all darkness. With all the issues that we face today, the world needs to be 'enlightened' once again with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We need His teachings that celebrate life and family, promote peace and justice, and that uphold the dignity of each person. We need Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).

This pastoral plan challenges us to be Christ bearers by witnessing to His message of salvation. It also calls us to proclaim the transformative power of His love that invites us into a personal relationship with Him. This is the heart of evangelization.

I sincerely thank you for all that you do as fervent followers of Jesus Christ. I am so blessed to be the bishop of such a wonderful diocese that is filled with so many faith-filled laity, consecrated women and men, and clergy. Thank you for all that you do to make Christ present in our world.

Despite all this good work, there is still much more to be done.

St. John tells us, "My beloved people, who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" (1John 5:5). Darkness can only be conquered by 'light from light'. Our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gives us the means to reflect His light and to kindle the fire of His love in this world. This is the foundation of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

I invite you to read this document prayerfully and thoughtfully and to reflect upon its call to action. What is being presented is not something new or revolutionary. It is a simple appeal to live out our baptismal call to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

May God bless you and the Diocese of St. Catharines.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines

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