



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

*Office of the Bishop*

October 27, 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our Holy Father has announced that 2025 will be a Jubilee Year - a time of special grace for the Church. Hope is a central message of this Jubilee with the motto 'Pilgrims of Hope'. In a letter promoting the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis stated, "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision."

Our diocese will celebrate this special occasion with multiple events. If we are called to look to the future with far-sighted vision, however, we need to assess more intentionally the needs of our local church and the resources available to carry out our mission to proclaim the Gospel.

For this reason, the Diocese of Grand Rapids is embarking on a diocesan-wide pastoral planning process entitled "**Rooted in Christ.**" In his Letter to the Colossians, St. Paul writes, "So as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted in him and built upon him and established in the faith as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col 2:6-7). As St. Paul challenged the early Church, we too, must be rooted in Christ to bear fruit for the Kingdom.

We have engaged the Meitler Group, which has worked on similar campaigns in dioceses across the country, to assist us in this planning process. They will collect data, visit all of our parishes, facilitate meetings with clergy and parish representatives, and guide us in formulating strategies to strengthen our local Church according to the priorities indicated by the information gathered. This process is expected to take several months and will conclude by next summer with a pastoral plan to guide us forward.

As we enter this process on the cusp of this Jubilee Year let us place our trust in the Lord to be guided by the Holy Spirit as pilgrims of hope.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak  
Bishop of Grand Rapids