



October 18, 2018, Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As a Church we continue to face challenges which require spiritual conversion and practical changes. We have recently concluded our novena of Tuesdays which I called for in August; we have also strengthened all our Child Protection programs as was announced in “A Plan to Protect” and other communication resources. However, beyond our prayer and fasting, and our ongoing efforts to find practical ways to protect our children and purify our Church, I am convinced that we are at a time, both in our society and our Church, when we need to take an even more dramatic step in seeking the Providence of God and the intercession of our Blessed Mother, to safeguard the Church and to help us all to deepen our own spiritual lives. Therefore, I take this opportunity to share with you that **on December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the United States, I intend to consecrate our Diocese of Kalamazoo to the protection of Mary, the Mother of the Church;** I also invite every parish, every family, and every member of the faithful to do the same.

At times of serious problems, Mary faithfully and consistently points us to her Son, Jesus. From the beginning to the end of God’s work of salvation through Jesus Christ, His Mother, Mary, was never far away, and continued to say “Yes” to God’s holy Will, no matter the circumstance. When Jesus came into the world and took a human nature to himself, He did so only after Mary gave consent, saying “Let it be done unto me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). The first miracle Jesus ever worked publicly came at the intercession of Mary, who told Him that the young couple at the wedding in Cana had no more wine, and then told the waiters: “Do whatever He tells you.” (John 2:6). Even in the final moments of His earthly life, when Jesus was on the cross and it seemed as if He had nothing else to give, He turned to His beloved disciple and said, “Behold your mother”; and then turned to His Mother and said, “Woman, behold your son” (John 19:27). He gave Mary as a Mother, not only to that beloved disciple, but also to every beloved disciple who would come and follow after him. She was one of the early witnesses of Jesus’ Resurrection, and was prayerfully present with the Apostles at Pentecost, when the Church was confirmed in the Spirit. Down through the ages, up until our own day and time, Mary continues to watch over us and pray for us, her children, and intercedes for us always, that we might receive all the graces necessary to be conformed to her Son, Jesus Christ, and so that we, too, may “do whatever He tells us”.

Although Mary is already the Mother of every Christian disciple, many Saints throughout the centuries have desired to make this reality more visible in their own lives through an Act of Consecration to Mary. The Act of Consecration is simply an expression of trust in Mary’s intercession, and a conscious and purposeful recommitment to our Baptismal Promises. It was on the day of our baptism when we (or our godparents on our behalf) renounced Satan and all his empty works and promises, and then professed faith in one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who grants us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. By the Act of Consecration to Mary, we recommit ourselves to these promises and, at the same time, entrust the entire endeavor of our spiritual life to Our Lady, confident in her desire for our salvation and her intercession on our behalf. By means of this Act, accompanied by other acts of devotion, such as the Rosary and other prayers approved by the Church, our hearts are transformed more and more to be like Mary’s own heart, which always reached out to God in every sorrow and joy. The more we are one with God, and strengthened by the graces and protection of our Blessed Mother, the more we are prepared to live our lives of faith in this world, with courage, compassion, love and mercy. Thus, we are better prepared to be joyful witnesses of our faith, through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy that Jesus inspires us to practice each day: the evidence of our lived faith. By consecrating the Diocese, and inviting every parish, every family, and every member of the Faithful to do the same, we can deepen our special relationship with her and, through her intercession, with her Son, our Lord Jesus.

In the weeks ahead, you will find various resources to help all of us be prepared to make an Act of Consecration to Mary, Mother of the Church. These will be found on our diocesan website (www.diokzoo.org) and Facebook page.

Let us turn together to Mary our Mother and entrust ourselves to her maternal protection. As St. Bernard of Clairvaux writes: “When Mary supports you, you will not fail. With her as your protector, you will have nothing to fear. With her as your guide, you will not grow weary. When you win her favor, you will reach the port of heaven.”

With assurances of my daily prayers to Our Blessed Mother for each one of you, and humbly asking for your prayers for me as well, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads “+ Paul J. Bradley”.

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo