



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF TRENTON
701 LAWRENCEVILLE ROAD
POST OFFICE BOX 5147
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08638-0147

August 15, 2009

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today is a special day in the life of our diocese. We celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patroness of the Diocese of Trenton. We reflect on the life of the Blessed Mother, and the “sign of certain hope and comfort” that her Assumption into Heaven provides for the Church on earth.

This day is also special for us because today we publicly introduce *Led by the Spirit: A Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Trenton*. A plan that will aide us as we live out the mission of Jesus Christ in the Church of Trenton for years to come. Newsprint copies of this document are available for you at the doors of the Church. Please take one home and read it. Pray about it. Discuss it. Then I invite you to find out how you can get involved in your parish to work toward its goals in the weeks and months ahead.

Our Diocese looks to Mary, its Patroness, as the model and guide for its life and ministry. We look to Mary, our Mother to be our heavenly intercessor. As we begin to respond to priorities for our local Church, we must draw inspiration from Mary’s example and seek her intercession for the successful implementation of this plan. In the words of our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, “Mary made room for the Lord in her soul and thus really became the true temple where God made himself incarnate, where he became present on this earth. She was God’s dwelling place on earth...” a new Ark of the Covenant. We follow Mary’s example as we strive to implement the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. Like Mary, let us make room for the Lord and invite him to be present to others through our words and our witness.

The Virgin Mary was heralded by her cousin Elizabeth with the words “Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” Mary believed the Lord would keep his promises to the people of Israel. She trusted God and bravely followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit throughout her life. As we make concrete and practical progress toward our goals and objectives, we must trust God and allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit into new and more effective action.

In today’s Gospel, we hear again the beautiful words of the Magnificat, “The Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his Name.” Mary acknowledged her utter dependence on God. God alone is the source of all goodness. We look to Mary’s example as we plan for ministry in our parishes and across the diocese, seeking God’s will in all things and serving with humility and gratitude.

As our Mother in Heaven, Mary intercedes on our behalf with her prayers. Through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, may we have the grace to follow her example and to respond generously where the Spirit leads us. With every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John M. Smith
Bishop of Trenton