



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT  
1234 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

22 January 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In a little more than a week's time, along with the other bishops of Michigan and Ohio, I will be on my way for our "Ad limina" Visit – the pilgrimage to Rome required of all diocesan bishops at least every five years. The official days for our visit are 1-6 February. This trip, while it has several distinct components, is basically a pilgrimage to strengthen the bonds of our unity with our Holy Father the Pope.

Let me make a brief remark about each of the components and then go on to reflect with you on the meaning of this pilgrimage, because the significance of its meaning is the reason I am writing this letter.

The visit has three principal elements. First, we bishops go to pray at

the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul; in fact, we will offer there the Holy Eucharist, the sacrifice by which Christ established and maintains the communion that binds us together in his Mystical Body. Second, we will meet with heads of Vatican offices – what are often thought of as the "cabinet departments" which assist Pope Benedict in his governance of the Church universal – in order to discuss matters of mutual concern for advancing the good of the People of God. And third, we will have an audience with the Holy Father to hear what is on his mind and in his heart as our Chief Shepherd – Peter-for-us-today.

As I mentioned above, the whole point of this pilgrimage is to reaffirm and strengthen our communion with the Pope, the Bishop of Rome. And this communion concerns not just me as a bishop, but you as members of the local Church entrusted to my care. Your communion in life and faith with your bishop, and my communion with the Pope mean that you and I share the same life of grace as does Pope Benedict. That's important because he is the successor of St. Peter as Christ's Vicar. To be in union with Pope Benedict is to be in union with Peter. To be in this communion is our guarantee that what you and I believe is what Peter and Paul and the other Apostles knew and confessed about Jesus. Our communion with the Bishop of Rome, the leader of the local Church where St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred for the faith, is a sort of "seal of authentication" that we belong to the one same community – that the Apostles are truly our fathers, and through our fellowship with them we have full fellowship with the Lord Jesus who appointed them his ambassadors.

In the website of the Archdiocese I have more to share with you about my pilgrimage, but for now I want to affirm that in going to Rome as the pastor of our community, I bring all of you with me in spirit. I will assure the Holy Father of your deep love and loyalty. I ask that you accompany me with your thoughts and prayers – especially your prayers: prayers for His Holiness, prayers for his clergy and people in his Diocese of Rome, prayers for the Archdiocese of Detroit, prayers for the whole Catholic Church throughout the world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Rev. Allen H. Vigneron  
Archbishop of Detroit

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ad limina pilgrimage by visiting  
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