



**ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of ORANGE**

PASTORAL CENTER: BISHOP'S OFFICE
13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

August 6, 2019

Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

My dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

As we arrive at this providential and auspicious occasion, the dedication of our Diocesan Christ Cathedral, I look back on the past 6+ years of this adventure with gratitude to God. When Bishop Tod Brown and his advisors responded to the presenting opportunity to obtain this campus, I imagine, the scope of this project was only a vague outline at best. As it has taken shape, both prayer and work have been essential to the “building” of this Cathedral, this “House of God and Gate of Heaven”. I thank the Lord not only for this having been accomplished but for all involved in this great work of worship and love!

From the beginning, there has been a powerful vision of this Cathedral and its campus as a beacon of faith and light for Southern California, even for the world, that it might become a “center of evangelization and mission”, and that we the “Mother Church” as Dr. Schuller referred to us would carry this on. In all the work and mission and commitment of the building of this Cathedral, which has resulted in the beautiful Cathedral sanctuary, there has been this larger, concomitant and deeper effort at the heart of the project. We are not just building a beautiful space – we are building a witness and the “City of God” as we sang some years ago! When you view the light shining from the Cathedral at night, which is so spectacularly beautiful, I hope you will be reminded that we also are to be a light to the world. I would encourage everyone to take some time to do just this.

So, now, with the dedication, we have come to an end of this part of the journey and let us celebrate it! But this is, of course, not an end at all but another beginning. As we move into this new reality, this new Cathedral sanctuary, we have recently published our Diocesan Strategic Plan which identified our top priorities for the coming years. Evangelization and Faith Formation are at the top of our list of priorities – and utilizing this campus as a center of evangelization is included under those priorities. So, can we begin?

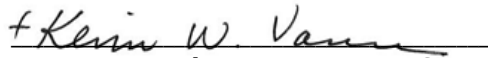
As we approach this new chapter, we begin with prayer. Our history tells us, Scripture instructs us, the Church teaches us....prayer is essential to our relationship with God and the necessary foundation of all our endeavors. It is through prayer, which begins in our hearts that we enter into intimacy with God. We are thirsty for God and only prayer can quench our thirst. Many of us learned at one time that prayer is the “lifting up of our minds and hearts to God”, and in this new time in the life of our local Church we must do just that: each and every day! In every challenging and fractured age, when the people of God have committed anew to prayer, it becomes apparent that indeed the Holy Spirit has renewed the Church. Yes, certainly we live in a challenging age perhaps EVERY age is a challenging age. My study of Church history years ago in Kenrick Seminary under the guidance of Sr. Zoe Glenski, DC taught me this. As the foundation of the former “Crystal Cathedral” was strengthened in the construction, so too our own foundations of faith and worship must be strengthened. And if we are to build the living stones of the Church to fill this Cathedral with worship, prayer is surely our first priority and our first step.

So at this important moment of the life of our Diocese, I would like to announce the beginning of a Year of Prayer in the Diocese of Orange. Various resources will be offered to parishes and schools to promote and strengthen the practices of prayer in the life of the faithful. Each day my staff will pray at noon for the needs of parishes, staffs and all souls entrusted to the care of our Diocese. Departmental staff will also pray regularly for these intentions. I encourage you to pray with others or on your own for these needs as well.

I invite all our parishes, schools and agencies; our houses of consecrated men and women; and all families and individuals to pray that all of us will become more deeply friends of Jesus and a community of witnesses to the world. I would also ask each of us to think of the people who have taught us to pray as we were growing up, as I remember how my mother and father did this for us, each in our own way. Finally, that we may be one community at prayer, praise and worship, I would ask that this prayer be recited at the end of the Prayers of the Faithful (Universal Prayer) during liturgies celebrated in the diocese during our Year of Prayer:

*O God,
May every person within the Diocese of Orange
Come to personally know and love our Lord Jesus Christ.
May they grow in maturity as a missionary disciple of Christ,
become actively engaged in the full life and mission of the Church
And joyfully use his or her gifts
To share the Good News and build up the Kingdom of God
For the salvation of souls. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN*

I want to thank each and every one of you for your faithful and faith filled witness. "May the God of Hope fill all with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." (Romans 15:13)



Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann, J.C.D., D.D.
Bishop of Orange in California, U.S.A.