

DRAFT  
11/4/08

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this year of St. Paul the Apostle, we can exclaim with him “where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more” (Rom 5:20). We entrust ourselves and our works for Jesus to the immense love He has for us.

We find ourselves in a period of great anxiety in the world around us. Indeed, many times our own lives are infected with anxiety and concerns as we face an increasingly uncertain future. The ideology of secularism enslaves the human person to a shallowness of life that at best is only a shadow of true happiness. Yet, it is precisely into this world that we are sent out as sowers of seeds and fishers of men, to collaborate with the Holy Spirit in bringing forth the Kingdom of God. The Blessed Trinity created the world in love. Even after sin had entered the world, God so loves humanity that He chose to come into this world so that we could be reborn into the freedom of the children of God. As Christians we are sent out into the world to live a rich human life and to help others to know true love. The radical nature of our mission is demonstrated by the Lord Jesus who describes his mission “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

Pope Benedict XVI, at his inaugural Mass observed “And the Church is young. She holds within herself the future of the world and therefore shows each of us the way toward the future.” We in the Diocese of Tyler find ourselves still a historically a very young Church. A Church that is growing and developing in response to February 24, 2012 will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of our Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. With the help of God's grace, this anniversary can be a great event of evangelization. I encourage prayer and intentional discipleship in collaborating with the Holy Spirit who is at work within us. Let us witness a deepening appreciation for our lived Communion in Christ.

The Diocese of Tyler will initiate a program to help us more consciously respond to the call of God's grace. I ask each community in the Diocese of Tyler and each household of faith to join in a three year period of preparation leading up to a year long celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The focus of this program will be:

***Live abundantly! Live in Jesus!***  
Enjoy true freedom as sons and daughters of God

While this program is prompted by our upcoming anniversary, the message is intended to be a part of the New Evangelization. Therefore, I invite all Christians and people of good will to consider anew the promise of Jesus Christ. The new life of Baptism calls forth a response from the heart of each believer. I encourage each parish and mission to take an active part in giving public witness to the hope we have in Jesus Christ by cooperation with other Christian communities and indeed with other religious groups. The ideology of secularism will require an increasingly strong and united response from all those who seek to love and serve God.

Let us pray that this program will help our Local Church in East Texas to more deeply enter into the New Evangelization and strengthen the processes of Christian Initiation, Liturgical Renewal, and the Call to Discipleship and Holiness. I entrust this program to the loving heart of Mary, the Immaculate

Conception, patroness of our diocese.

Given on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2008.