



DIocese of TYLER

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

September 2019

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Tyler,

In anticipation of the last weeks of 2019, I feel compelled to share words of hope in Jesus Christ and to give witness to my firm faith in our beloved Catholic Church; the Church established by God's Divine Son. I am inspired by these words from in 1 Peter 5, "God's flock is in your midst; give it a shepherd's care. Watch over it willingly, as God would have you do, not under constraint, and not for shameful profit, either, but generously." Although these words have guided me throughout my episcopacy, I know that at times I have failed and I ask your forgiveness.

The last year has been one of tremendous turmoil and upheaval in the world and in the Church. We have reason to heed St. Paul's words to the Colossians which are as relevant today as they were in the early Church: "See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to the tradition of men, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ." (Col 2:8) As your Bishop, I want to give you the best shepherd's care and guidance possible to help you strengthen your faith and to fortify your prayer life. I say this not to frighten you but to call you to vigilance. We must be vigilant and rely on the power of prayer to combat the evils that surround the Church.

I ask every disciple in the Diocese of Tyler to pray in union with me and all the faithful in the diocese, a *Novena to the Holy Spirit* beginning on September 27, the memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, and ending on October 5, the eve of the Synod on the Amazon.

I have enclosed an optional Novena for you and your family to pray; however, you may choose one of your own. This prayer, along with videos, will be posted in the "News" section of the Diocesan website and on Facebook.

Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to renew our faith in Jesus Christ and his Church entrusted to his Apostles on Pentecost, to guide the Church away from any false doctrine and infuse Her with the strength to embrace the ancient deposit of faith with new fervor

May God bless us in His Grace and Mercy and may the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of heaven and earth intercede for us.

Sincerely in Christ's Name,

Most Reverend Joseph E. Strickland
Bishop of Tyler