



DIOCESE OF NELSON

Catholic Pastoral Centre

3665 Benvoulin Road, Kelowna, B.C. Canada V1W 4M7

Phone: 250-448-2725 Fax: 866-964-3858

cpc@nelsondiocese.org – www.nelsondiocese.org

October 1, 2012

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Year of Faith

The month of October 2012 is a momentous time of grace for the universal Church. On 11 October 2012, Pope Benedict XVI will announce the beginning of a *Year of Faith*. The opening of the Year of Faith will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of *the Second Vatican Council*. It will end on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King, 24 November 2013. 11 October 2012 also marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Faith* which Pope John Paul II hoped would bring the beauty and teaching of the Second Vatican Council to Christians throughout the world. Pope Benedict XVI has also chosen the month of October 2012 to convoke a General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to treat the theme: *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. This important gathering of Bishops from all corners of the world will highlight the call of the Church to bring the light, the truth, the hope and the love of the gospel of Jesus to touch all aspects of life in our world. I will attend this Synod of Bishops as one of the representatives of the Bishops of Canada. Finally, on 21 October 2012, Pope Benedict XVI will solemnly canonize Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, inscribing this Canadian icon of First Nations faith among the saints of our Church. Indeed, October 2012 will be a time of grace.

“You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, ... I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.” (Jn 15: 16 – 17)

This simple passage spoken by Jesus to his disciples at the Last Supper makes three important statements which are given emphasis by the Year of Faith. Faith is a gift: “You did not choose me but I chose you” (Jn. 15:16). The gift of faith is given to you and to me, but it is meant to be a blessing for the world: “I appointed you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last” (Jn. 15:16). Jesus tells us our gift to the world is the love we show one another: “I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another” (Jn. 15: 17). St. Paul summarizes the same point in his Letter to the Galatians: “the only thing that counts is faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6)

During the Year of Faith, in July 2013, *World Youth Day* will be celebrated in Rio di Janiero, Brazil. Twenty young adults from our Diocese will join hundreds of thousands of other young, committed Christians from around the world to celebrate their common faith. WYD draws attention to still another dimension of the Year of Faith, namely, that our faith comes alive in the community of the Church. This is evident in the very birth of the Church described in the Acts of the Apostles:

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like a rush of violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2: 1-4)

In a sermon, St. Anthony notes that a tongue of fire rested on each individual disciple. He goes on to say that in the intense unity and communion of the early Church, these individual tongues of fire coalesced to form a river of fire which filled the world.

The Year of Faith is a challenge and invitation to the Diocese of Nelson and to each of the communities – parishes and missions – which make up our Diocesan family. We are invited to allow the Spirit of God to revitalize our faith so that, together, we may become that “river of fire”, that power of love which can bring new life and vitality to our families and our communities. We wish to build upon foundations already planted. Last year, more than one thousand adult members of our Diocesan family took part in **Believe**. You came together in dozens of reflection groups to share your faith. This year, the Diocese is promoting a widely renowned ten-week program entitled **Catholicism**. This will give us a remarkable opportunity to join our brothers and sisters on an even deeper investigation and sharing of the faith which is God’s gift to us. The remarkable success of **Believe** was built upon a number of factors. The pastors of the Diocese enthusiastically supported the program. The Office of Faith Formation fanned out across the Diocese to train group leaders in each community to direct the discussion groups. Most of all, the Lord touched your hearts to respond with generosity. During the month of October, members of the Office of Faith Formation will once again fan out across the Diocese to prepare group leaders to lead **Catholicism**. It is my prayer that the Lord will once again call forth from you an enthusiastic response in order that **Catholicism** will be that “tongue of fire” which will unite us anew and form within our Diocese a river of the fire of God’s love.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ John Corriveau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+John Corriveau, OFM Cap.
Bishop of Nelson

