**Leadership & Evangelization Workshop**

**Fetzer Center, Western Michigan University,**

**May 5, 2016 10 a.m.**

* Good morning!
* Let us begin our time together today in prayer. I believe you have copies of the prayer [hold up colored copy]
* [Opening Prayer- Diocesan Pastoral Plan]
* What an honor it is to be here with you today
* I’m told there are close to 200 participants here today – with all 28 Parish Collaboratives represented and almost all our parishes as well.
* I’m so grateful for all you did to make time in your schedules and to those that have traveled from the far corners of the nine- counties of our Diocese to be here today and those that sacrificed a vacation day from work.
* You’re all very much needed as we work to implement the Diocesan Pastoral Plan: A Future Full of Hope.
* Today, as you know, is the official Feast of the Ascension of our Blessed Mother – here in Michigan the Feast is moved to this Sunday - ….
* As you probably know the priests spent the first two days of this week together …
* We had the opportunity to reflect on our priestly ministry, to spend time thinking about our own gifts and talent with the help of Catholic Leadership Institute, enjoyed a talk from Bishop Emeritus Carl Mengeling, Diocese of Lansing,
* And then just yesterday we had time together with our Deacons to go over more of the particulars of the coming transition to the Parish Collaborative model and the further implementation of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan
* Today’s workshop, and your assistance, is so very important to the success of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
* I have been so encourage and inspired by the level of engagement of not only our clergy but also of our parish staffs and our volunteers like all of you.
* We have had numerous people working at the parish level, reviewing Mass schedules, and within those discussions coming up with even more ideas on how the collaboratives can work together – whether it’s by simply sharing information or embarking on a joint- project.
* We are indeed at a momentous time in our Diocesan History – coming up to 45 years this summer –
* And with this, like with any change, there will be challenges that need to be addressed and opportunities that need to be championed.
* And of course that’s where great volunteers like yourself come into play – to be at the parishes guiding this process along the way.
* AS we move into this new way of providing pastoral care for our people----this Plan is grounded in what all of us – priests, deacons, --agreed together was our first priority: *providing the best possible pastoral care for our people.*
* Of course, it’s the mission of the Church that’s always at the center of what we’re called to do.
* I’m calling for all Parish Collaboratives to have a “Renewal” program identified and begun this fall.
* It’s more important than ever for us to fully embrace the invitation to Evangelization which is why this afternoon’s session is so important as you look at what that really means and will entail.
* In just a few moments, Mike Fulluam from CLI will give you an overview of today’s agenda.
* I’m confident that today will be helpful as you work to assist our parishes and even more so as together we build up God’s Kingdom here in our little corner of the world in Southwest Michigan.
* Thanks again and I hope you have a Spirit-filled day.