



The Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande

The Rt. Rev. Michael Louis Vono, D.D., IX Bishop

January 4, 2017

Beloved Laity and Clergy of the Diocese of the Rio Grande,

The month of January opens our hearts to a time of looking towards the future and beginning a hopeful, faith-filled journey into the New Year, and as Christians we do this both "in" and "with" Christ. New visions, new dreams, new bold goals and renewed anticipations lead us forward into realizing God's plan for each one of us. January provides a time of new beginnings.

Time moves quickly. With deep and profound gratitude to each one of you and to my wonderful staff, I am entering the seventh year serving the Church of Jesus Christ as your Bishop. I thank the Lord for the great privilege of sharing these wonderful years with you. Now the time has come for us to look ahead. My heart and soul have been telling me, after forty years as a cleric, that my retiring time has come. I have properly notified the Standing Committee and my staff, as well as our Diocesan Council, of my intention to call for the election of the tenth Bishop of the Rio Grande in 2018. In due course, I will formally make my request to the Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, who will inform the House of Bishops and thereby begin the process of granting consent for me to resign as Bishop Diocesan. More details will come to you in the months ahead from the President and members of the Standing Committee.

There are no words that can adequately express my love for each one of you. You have been my family and truly, as the Body of Christ, we have become a dynamic spiritual family in the Diocese of the Rio Grande. For many years and into eternity, I will keep and cherish all the extraordinary memories, joy and challenges of Jesus' ministry shared with you. God is good. God will guide us forward and provide an episcopal Shepherd who will continue to nurture and empower New Mexico and Far West Texas as a Matthew 25 Diocese.

May God Bless and keep you and may the light of his countenance shine upon you this day and every New Year. Blessings.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.