



## THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS

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Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Memphis

On this Solemnity of Epiphany, we gather as one church to celebrate the great manifestation of Jesus Christ our Savior to the world. For the Diocese of Memphis, this is an especially blessed occasion as we celebrate the 48th anniversary of our 1971 establishment as a diocese on the Solemnity of the Epiphany. Together, let us pray that Jesus Christ, the light of the world, will be the light that brightens our hearts, our families, our parishes, and our communities.

Over the last two months, I have had the privilege to serve as your apostolic administrator. It has been a joy to serve you and to meet so many of you. Before Christmas, I had the opportunity on separate occasions to meet and pray with the priests who serve you, the deacons and their spouses, our fine seminarians, and the diocesan staff. The genuine desire of all these pastoral leaders to serve in holiness and generosity is very apparent to me. Please pray in thanksgiving for their service to Christ and to you.

As we deal with sexual abuse scandals of the past, of great importance to all of us is the safety of our youth and children. I have met with representatives of the Diocese of Memphis Sexual Abuse Review Board. The full board will be meeting this month to ensure that the policies of the diocese are up-to-date and that steps are being taken to ensure a safe environment through full compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. At this time, the Board will be recommending to me a plan for actions to be considered by the new bishop as well as any actions that prudently should be pursued immediately.

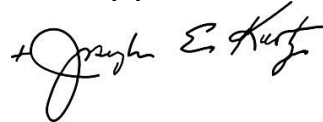
I also want to thank you for your past generosity to the ministries and services of your parish and to the diocesan ministries, which includes the great work of Catholic Charities of West Tennessee. Before Christmas, I was pleased to visit with some of those served by Catholic Charities and with the staff and volunteers who minister in our name.

Next month, the Annual Catholic Appeal will provide opportunities for all of us to support these needed services. I look forward to being part of the kick-off meetings, and I have helped prepare a video that tells the story of these ministries. I also have met with the Finance Council of the Diocese of Memphis, and the members of this council impressed me with their commitment and their competence. I can assure you that the funds raised through the Annual Catholic Appeal will be used in a way that reflects good and responsible stewardship.

Finally, I ask for your prayers for the new bishop. With this letter, I enclose a special prayer for all of us to pray as Pope Francis prepares to select the next bishop of Memphis. While there is no timetable for this decision, it is my fond hope that a bishop will be installed during 2019. In the meantime, I assure you of my commitment and that of my delegate, Fr. Robert Marshall, to serve you well in the interim.

Please continue to pray for me and for one another. May this Solemnity of the Epiphany make us ever grateful for the gift of our faith, for each other, and most especially, for Jesus Christ, Who is the Light of the World.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph E. Kurtz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "K".

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.  
Apostolic Administrator