

The year 2009 has now gone for good. Alleluia! To say the least, it has been a very busy and challenging year. But, more than anything else, it was a year that tested the human spirit almost to its limit. Without God's abiding grace, a good number of us might not have made it to this New Year of 2010. To God be the glory!

As we all must have known by now, the restructuring of the Vicariates and Regions have been completed. We have a better picture of how things stand at this point in time. We can no longer speculate. Now we know that Renaissance Vicariate is still in the central region. But, we also know now that its number has decreased from 26 to 18 parishes, with the following parishes- St. Clare of Montefalco, Star of the Sea, St. Paul on the Lake, St. Ambrose, St. Peter the Apostle, Our Lady Queen of Peace, St. Hyacinth, and Assumption Grotto leaving us for neighboring vicariates, namely, Serf and Genesis Vicariates, respectively. We are saddened by their departure, for we have formed a great of friendship with them, but we thank God for the opportunity of working with them until now. Through our common sharing and ministry, we have enriched one another. To God be the glory! Their departure, no doubt, creates a vacuum, but it also throws a challenge and an opportunity for a new vision and growth.

This explains why I have titled this new year reflection: **A NEW YEAR AND A NEW VISION**. Instead of dwelling on the sadness of the separation, it should be our vision to collaborate not only with the three other vicariates within our region, but also with our other sister-vicariates like Serf and others for the mutual benefit of all, and for the incarnation of the Good News in our respective vicariates and the entire Archdiocese. Man-made boundaries should not impede this goal.

To be able to do this we must have the mindset of working hard and working together for the common good. Here in Renaissance Vicariate, for instance, parishes are to deem it important to send knowledgeable representatives to monthly Vicariate meetings. A situation whereby some parishes are represented- while others remain "no shows"- cannot be in the over-all interest of our common good and progress.

A fundamental step to our new vision is to ensure that every one of these 18 remaining parishes send regular representatives to the monthly meeting. This is particularly imperative now that our various programs and projects, as outlined in our budget in September last year, are set to take off. We need every parish representative to be part of the various Commissions or Committees, if our progress is to be registered, especially in the vital areas of educational programs and outreach to the poor. As we all know, more often than not, two heads are better than one. Therefore, let one of our priorities this year be ensuring that our parishes are adequately represented at Vicariate meetings. Please send the name (s) of your parish representative (s) to our new Vicariate Newsletter Editor, Mr. Todd Belknap- or his wife, Leann- at email editor@renvic.org or call @ 734-225-7096. They will make sure that you receive regular minutes of the meetings and other relevant information. Please, do this before our Vicariate Council meeting on Thursday, January 28, at St. Aloysius Parish. The sooner this is done, the better. Also, send all your Ads or parish announcements that you want to be published in our Vicariate Newsletter to Todd and his wife before the 15th of each month. And, of course, don't forget to visit Renaissance Vicariate website regularly. It is quite a treat. Visit it soon if you haven't done so yet. It's simple to log onto: <http://www.renvic.org/>. Enjoy the treat. Don't miss out!

One of our goals this year is to teach and deepen the faith of our people in the Vicariate through exposure to relevant experts, and also help the needy and poor in our midst as much as we can. These worthy goals will remain elusive if parishes do not participate fully at meetings. As the African expression puts it, "*It takes a village to raise a child.*" The efforts of all of us are needed if Renaissance Vicariate is to continue to make progress. And, this progress requires patience and hard work. As the Chinese proverb says: "*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*"

Let us take the most fundamental step this year by having all our 18 parishes fully represented at every Vicariate meeting. Can we not do that? Think about it.

Finally, a word of gratitude to the various individuals that helped to make a difference in Renaissance Vicariate in this past year. By spear-heading or solidly supporting our efforts to prepare our budget, and by putting in place the various programs and projects, these selfless individuals have helped to move our vicariate forward. We are proud of them. And, may God to bless them. For obvious reasons, including space and time, it won't be possible to mention them individually here. But, we owe them our thanks. As some of them get ready to leave our Vicariate to a new one, I say: *May God's smile rest upon you! Know that your work will live on.*

Finally, I say: Happy New Year to you all as you read this Newsletter, and as we gear up for the blessings and challenges of this season. May God's blessings rest upon us all, Amen! See you all at St Aloysius Parish, 1234 Washington Blvd, Detroit, on January 28.

FR. MICHAEL C. NKACHUKWU
Pastor, Good Shepherd Parish