



*The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan*  
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March 19, 2009

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the House of Bishops:

As the retired bishop of The Diocese of Northern Michigan, I want you to know how remarkably this diocese has gathered itself following the deep and painful wound of Jim Kelsey's untimely death. During the virtual two years since then this diocese has reached out to each other in a collaborative response to our crisis. The diverse leadership that emerged was remarkable and wide spread, exhibiting the tenaciousness and faithfulness that characterizes citizens of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It was remarkable for me to witness.

During these months Kevin was significant among us exhibiting a calm and sturdy presence, a hopefulness and faithfulness in the face of great anxiety. The energy and excitement generated by the Discernment Committee was palpable and this committee represented a remarkably diverse participation from within the diocese. Call any one of them and you will learn first hand how confident they are in their process and convinced the Spirit worked profoundly among them. As they sifted through various possibilities, it has become clear to me that they were drawn to a convincing consensus in nominating Kevin. The electing convention exhibited the same overwhelming consensus where a super majority is canonically necessary.

If my testimony leaves any shred of doubt, please call Brenda, my wife. She is an active member of St. Paul's Church in Marquette (where Kevin is rector), as am I when not companioning a small neighboring congregation. She finds life in that congregation to be profoundly reassuring that our Church is not dying, but flourishing. As we all know, a rector does not create this, but without the rector such excitement would not be flourishing.

Presumably there is some E-mail concern that Kevin is not fully Christian. Well, he honors his baptism like few I know and I have known Kevin and Rise for over fifteen years. He seeks to affirm every one's baptism in this diocese and as bishop he would carry daily this conviction: "You belong to Christ, you are His light in this world." Kevin is authentically in love with Jesus and such a faith can not be fabricated or pretended. A fake is quickly discerned. I am absolutely clear that Kevin is for real and shares personally and deeply my Christian friendship.

Let me conclude. This diocese has emerged out of Gethsemane with a vitality, a cohesiveness, and a vision that is unquestionably inspired. As an aging and ailing elder of this diocese, I smile with gratitude and satisfaction that this simple diocese is such a unique

testimony to our Christian faith, our ministry and mission. Kevin is not only a gift to us in this diocese, he could be a similar gift in our House of Bishops.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Ray  
*(Bishop, retired)*