



DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 26, 2020

Dear Parish Leader,

Blessings to you and your ministry! As you may know, this is the year when a new census is taken across our country. Please join me in supporting, promoting and participating in the 2020 Census. Participating in the census is a vital, civic duty and as well as a religious responsibility for all of us in the Diocese of Saginaw. Numbers matter, and it is important that every single person is counted.

Michigan stands to lose millions of dollars in federal support for programs that use census data. Each person that is not counted in the census could result in the State of Michigan losing approximately \$1,800 in federal support per person every year for the next ten years. This federal support comes in the form of resources for healthcare, nutrition assistance, education, roads, housing, and more. Most of the federal funds received in our communities directly help the poor and the underserved. Furthermore, if everyone is not counted, Michigan stands to lose another Congressional seat and a reduction in the number of electoral votes which means reduced representation at the federal level.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to help serve our brothers and sisters in need. This means doing what we can to see to it that every person is counted in the 2020 Census to secure needed funding; it is a matter of social justice – care and concern for the poor and the underserved.

Many community organizations have worked together to create materials which help promote census participation. As a partner in promoting participation, the Diocese will provide you with brief announcements to be read at Mass and inserted in bulletins during the next month, including sharing my letter with your people. We are also arranging to provide you flyers that can be inserted in bulletins and/or posted throughout your church and school buildings.

We would like our parishioners to be aware of the importance of participating in the 2020 Census which includes the following information:

- Everyone counts so be sure to take part in the census.
- Each household will receive a postcard beginning mid-March and can respond easily either online or by phone. This should take about 10 minutes. Support for multiple languages is available.

- The questions asked are basic and helpful guidance is available when needed.
- Confidentiality is guaranteed by law and personal information will not be shared with any other individual or agency. The Census Bureau is only allowed to use the information available to generate statistics.
- Counting children, a traditionally undercounted population, is important. Other hard-to-count populations which must be counted include people of color, immigrants, undocumented people, those with low incomes, and homeless individuals.

You can find additional resources and information at our Diocesan census page at saginaw.org/census. It is my hope that some of you may consider offering access to parish or school computers during certain times along with volunteers to assist community members in completing their census survey on-line.

Every single person counts. Thank you for supporting the 2020 Census.

Peace and joy in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert D. Gruss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw