

**HERITAGE AND HOPE  
OUR STORY AS A DIOCESAN FAMILY  
DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES**

I. THE CHURCH AS COMMUNION<sup>1</sup>

Jesus, our Light, places so much emphasis on communion of life and being that his whole mission depends on it: “I pray ... that all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.” On. 17:21)

The Second Vatican Council chose as one of its strongest symbols for the Church the concept of *communion*. The community of disciples formed by Jesus is different from any other form of community. Its origin and destiny is rooted in the nature and being of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Made in the image and likeness of God, we come to realize our gifts and mission through an intentional act of faith. Jesus is our model. His mission was to reconcile all things in himself. His life and death were focused on achieving reconciliation and restoring the original communion of all creation with God.

We, the Diocese of Las Cruces, embrace *communion* as our endowment and our challenge as well as the sign by which we shall be known. We search out our special gifts and talents to serve the Church and the world. In that context, formation and teaching are shaped by an understanding of the fundamental nature of community influenced by four recognized characteristics of the early Church: *Eucharist and shared prayer*,<sup>2</sup> *the Word of God*,<sup>3</sup> *shared life and faith*,<sup>4</sup> and *service*.<sup>5</sup> In addition, our exercise of *stewardship*, as well as our personal growth in roles of *leadership*, offer practical occasions both to apply and to learn from those unique gifts which we share in common. Indeed, through an active exploration' of each of these characteristics, we find and ratify those common values of faith formation that govern the actions of the entire community of the faithful.

In solidarity with the Bishop of Rome and our own bishop, we gather, we pray, we minister, and we celebrate to build relationships with all people, to proclaim the Good News, and to participate in fostering God's reign of love and Justice.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (LG1, 3, 48). *The Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation* (DV2, 4, 17). *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (GS 42). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church – The Church as Communion* (787-96, 813, 949, 951, 953, 1108, 1119).

<sup>2</sup> Gk. “*Leitourgia*”

<sup>3</sup> Gk. “*Kerygma*”

<sup>4</sup> Gk. “*Koinonia*”

<sup>5</sup> Gk. “*Diakonia*”