



# *The Diocese of New Jersey*

THE RIGHT REVEREND GEORGE EDWARD COUNCELL, D.D.

October 21, 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I write to inform you that, after prayer and consultation with family, friends and advisors, I intend to resign the office of Bishop of New Jersey and retire in the fall of 2013.

Please be assured that no crisis or sudden deterioration in my health has driven me to this decision. By the grace of our God I plan to continue to serve as your Bishop for at least the next two years – that is, until I complete ten years in this ministry and reach the age of sixty-four. Since the process leading to the call and consecration of a new bishop usually takes eighteen to twenty-four months, I hereby call for the election of the Twelfth Bishop of New Jersey. Note that this call is for the election of a diocesan bishop to succeed me immediately upon her or his consecration and not for a coadjutor bishop.

I have informed our Presiding Bishop of these plans and the Standing Committee and I have recently consulted with the Rt. Rev. F. Clayton Matthews, Bishop for Pastoral Development. Guided by our Constitution and Canons and with such help and consultation as the Standing Committee may seek from the Office of Pastoral Development, we are beginning an orderly transition to a new chapter in the history of our Diocese under the care of a new chief shepherd. Information about next steps in the episcopal election process will soon be forthcoming from the Standing Committee.

My heart is filled with gratitude to God and to the Church for calling me to be your Bishop eight years ago. It has been both more challenging and more blessed than I could have ever imagined. I look forward to these next two years with you all as we love and follow Jesus Christ together and continue “Right Onward” in mission for His sake.

*Lord, in your mercy, make New Jersey new. Amen.*

Faithfully yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. George E. Council, D.D.  
Bishop of New Jersey

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