

BA26 Homily – Be the Light

Hello, friends. This is Bishop David Ricken, and I am happy to be with you via this recorded message.

It's now been well over 17 years since I came to northeastern Wisconsin and began to serve as your bishop. I remember when I first came in 2008 and travelled around the diocese. I felt like I was in Catholic Disneyland. There were so many parishes, schools, hospitals and other Catholic institutions. Even the Virgin Mary appeared in our diocese in Champion! There was so much to see and to take in.

Since that time, I have also discovered the beauty of faith in the people behind these institutions. I have gotten to know our priests, deacons, sisters, lay leaders. I have come to know so many good and faithful people like you who serve in so many ways.

I have come to see how our scripture readings today are lived out in our very midst. Jesus calls us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our beautiful Catholic faith calls us to *Be the Light* in our world today.

We do that as we live our faith in service, as we feed the hungry, as we visit the lonely, and as we shelter the homeless. We are the light of Christ as we share Jesus with one another and our greater world. We become the light as we gather each Sunday to worship God and share in the Eucharist.

Today, I invite you to *Be the Light* by joining me in supporting this year's Bishop's Appeal. While we do many things to *Be the Light* as individuals, we also do things to *Be the Light* as the Catholic community of the Diocese of Green Bay.

In our name, the Office of Marriage and Family Life walks with couples who are preparing for the sacrament of marriage. They offer resources and mentoring to help newly married couples shine to the truth of God's presence at the heart of Christian marriage.

The Missionary Leadership Institute provides formation and training in both English and Spanish to those ready to serve the greater community as witnesses of faith. These missionary disciples serve in many different ways to share Jesus.

Catholic Charities counselors help clients see light at the end of the tunnel as they navigate mental health, financial health, or marriage struggles. Catholic Charities also partners with couples looking to grow their families by adoption. This and even more has been made possible thanks to your support of the Bishop's Appeal. Light is shining everywhere!

In so many ways, the work and ministry of the Diocese of Green Bay allows us to *Be the Light* to those around us. Those impacted by our diocesan programs and services are then able to *Be the Light* themselves to others around them. The light of Christ keeps expanding. It overcomes the darkness that we see in our world. It brings hope and renewed joy.

Please *Be the Light* for others through your participation in this year's Bishop's Appeal. Your one-time gift or a pledge gift offered over time allows me to direct resources to areas and circumstances needing light and hope. As you participate, you bring the light of Christ to others.

Will you *Be the Light* by joining with me in serving the people of our communities throughout the sixteen counties of northeast Wisconsin?

I am so grateful to the thousands of people who have participated in the past, and I know I can count on your ongoing support. This year I ask those who have not been able to participate in the past to prayerfully consider how you can join me and *Be the Light* through this appeal.

Thank you for willingness to *Be the Light* and continue the wonderful ways in which our Catholic faith makes our world a much better place.

I now ask your priest or pastoral leader to share some details of how you can participate in this year's appeal.

May God bless you and your loved ones abundantly: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!