



## Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

May 18, 2019

Dear Priests, Deacons and Faithful of the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

Easter blessings as together we rejoice in the triumphant glory of the Risen Lord and his victory over death. May God fill your home with peace, hope and love.

Five years ago we initiated *On Mission for The Church Alive!* with the goal of offering a deeper relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Church. Over that time you have been considering, praying and planning about how best to serve God and the people of your parishes.

This has not been a simple task. Jesus never promised that it would be easy to carry his message of love and mercy to others. He was clear that sacrifice would be necessary. However, the hard work you are undertaking is positioning your parishes for more effective ministry by addressing serious financial problems, sharing resources and allowing the clergy to focus on the spiritual work for which they were ordained. I am extremely appreciative of the faithful for their patience as this initiative unfolds and for the new life you have already brought to your parish groupings. I also remain deeply grateful to our priests and deacons for their care and leadership throughout this process. Their service as good shepherds will continue to lead us all closer to Jesus and provide opportunities for growth in our communities.

Today, I am announcing the first set of parish groupings that will merge into new parishes. These five parish groupings have worked extremely hard since last October to foster relationships and, after consultation in the groupings, were prepared to share with me their desire and readiness to form a new parish community. After receiving the unanimous approval of the diocesan Priest Council and Vicars General, the new parishes, effective July 1, 2019, are:

- **Christ Our Savior (North Side)**, which brings together the parishes of Saint Cyril of Alexandria (Brighton Heights), Holy Wisdom (North Side), Saint Peter (North Side), and Risen Lord (Marshall-Shadeland);
- **Holy Spirit (New Castle Area)**, which brings together the parishes of Saint Camillus (Neshannock), Christ the King (Bessemer/Hillsville), Saint James the Apostle (Pulaski), Saint Joseph the Worker (New Castle), Mary, Mother of Hope (New Castle), Saint Vincent de Paul (New Castle) and Saint Vitus (New Castle);
- **Saint Matthias (Greene County)**, which brings together the parishes of Saint Ann (Waynesburg), Saint Hugh (Carmichaels), Saint Ignatius of Antioch (Bobtown), Our Lady of Consolation (Crucible/Nemacolin/Rice's Landing) and Saint Thomas (Clarksville/Jefferson);
- **Saint Paul of the Cross (Castle Shannon/Mount Lebanon)**, which brings together the parishes of Saint Anne (Castle Shannon) and Saint Winifred (Mount Lebanon);

- **Saint Teresa of Kolkata (Beechview/Brookline)**, which brings together the parishes of Saint Catherine of Siena (Beechview), Our Lady of Loreto (Brookline), Saint Pamphilus (Beechview), Saint Pius X (Brookline) and Resurrection (Brookline).

A special thanks to the administrators, clergy teams and lay leaders of these five parish groupings who have helped make the vision of *On Mission for The Church Alive!* a living reality. This goes beyond the practical matters related to merging parishes and highlights the work being done to encourage their parishioners to deepen their relationship with Jesus and with each other, which is the most important reason for *On Mission*. A vibrant parish with effective ministries is now on the horizon for these parishes as they realize the goal of an evangelizing Church alive with the love of Christ and the love of neighbor.

In addition to these new parishes, a number of parish groupings are being realigned in light of particular needs that have arisen so that our communities can be best served. *On Mission for The Church Alive!* cannot take a cookie-cutter approach and we are constantly evaluating the most effective ways to respond in light of the unique circumstances of each parish grouping.

Earlier this year, a proposal was put forth that sought to establish a grouping of shrines, four parishes made up of five church buildings near Downtown Pittsburgh that have unique historical and spiritual significance for our diocese, as well as one parish church that is connected with one of the shrines. This grouping will both provide for the pastoral care of the faithful in these parishes and promote these shrines as places of pilgrimage and spiritual renewal for people throughout the diocese and even across the country.

Having approved this proposal, effective July 1, 2019, I am establishing the **Shrines of Pittsburgh Grouping**, which is composed of the parishes of Immaculate Heart of Mary (Polish Hill), Most Holy Name of Jesus (Troy Hill), Saint Nicholas (Millvale) and Saint Patrick-Saint Stanislaus Kostka (Strip District).

The shrines included in this new grouping are:

- **Saint Anthony Chapel (Troy Hill)**, which contains the second largest collection of relics in the world and the largest collection of relics for public veneration;
- **Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (Polish Hill)**, a prime example of “Polish Cathedral” architecture, which is modeled after Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome, and the first church in the United States to have the Divine Mercy Novena;
- **Saint Nicholas Church (Millvale)**, which houses the one-of-a-kind murals of Maxo Vanka. The murals depict the story of the immigration of Croatian peasants to the United States and Vanka’s belief regarding the futility of war and sadness at the destruction of Europe during World War II;
- **Saint Patrick Church (Strip District)**, which contains one of only a handful of replicas of the Holy Stairs that Jesus ascended to be judged by Pontius Pilate before he was crucified;
- **Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church (Strip District)**, one of the earliest Polish communities in the United States and which was visited in 1969 by Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, who would go on to become Pope Saint John Paul II.

In addition, the following parish groupings are being realigned in light of the creation of the Shrines of Pittsburgh grouping:

- **Bloomfield/Garfield/Lawrenceville Grouping**, which now comprises the parishes of Saint Maria Goretti (Bloomfield/Friendship/Garfield) and Our Lady of the Angels (Lawrenceville);

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- **City Center/Hill District Grouping**, which comprises the parishes of Saint Benedict the Moor (Hill District), Epiphany (Uptown) and Saint Mary of Mercy (The Point/Gateway Center);
- **Etna/Glenshaw/Millvale/Reserve Grouping**, which now comprises the parishes of All Saints (Etna), Saint Aloysius (Reserve Township), Saint Bonaventure (Glenshaw) and Holy Spirit (Millvale).

Additional information about the parish mergers and parish grouping realignments, such as clergy assignments, is contained on the attached sheet. It is also available at [www.diopitt.org/onmission](http://www.diopitt.org/onmission) and will be published in next week's *Pittsburgh Catholic*.

Two other changes related to church buildings are also being made. First, effective, July 1, 2019, Saint John XXIII Quasi-Parish will be located at the site of the current Risen Lord Church (Marshall-Shadeland). It will continue to serve the faithful who desire the celebration of the liturgy in the extraordinary form.

Finally, I am announcing the closure of the Corpus Christi church building of Saint Charles Lwanga Parish (East End), effective July 1, 2019. After consulting with the faithful of the parish and its Pastoral and Finance Councils, the administrator, Reverend Thomas J. Burke, petitioned that the building be closed. Mother of Good Counsel church will continue to be used by Saint Charles Lwanga parish for worship and to provide for the pastoral and spiritual needs of the faithful.

This is a pivotal time for our diocese as we plan for the future of the Church of Pittsburgh. While some may be frustrated, at times, with the *On Mission* process, rarely does someone say it shouldn't be taking place. Southwestern Pennsylvania is radically different than it was 100, 50, 20, even 10 years ago, yet the work of the Church and our call to love God and others is needed as much now as ever before. As we address the challenges we face in the Church today, the witness of working and growing together reflects the unity of the Body of Christ that is essential to our mission.

I appreciate your inspiring example of collaboration, courage and compassion. As *On Mission* continues to unfold, may we continue to rely on the will and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate who give us life as we come together for vibrant worship, responsive pastoral care and powerful evangelization. It is my daily prayer that every member of the Church of Pittsburgh is inspired by the powerful gifts of the Holy Spirit. I beg your prayers that those same gifts may always be at work in me.

Grateful for our continued efforts together in being *On Mission for The Church Alive!*, and for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,



Most Reverend David A. Zubik  
Bishop of Pittsburgh

Enclosures