



Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

June 19, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Divine Mercy Parish:

On June 12, 2020, I sent you a letter as a follow-up to my parish visit on February 23, 2020, and the results of the small Task Force that I commissioned under the direction of Father Joseph Freedy and Dr. Greta Stokes Tucker. At the end of last week's letter, I also explained the proposal of the Task Force for me to consider creating a personal parish for the black Catholic community in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and the necessary actions required to advance the proposal.

I can report that since that letter, the following necessary steps have been accomplished:

- a. Father Donley submitted to me a formal petition to create a personal parish signed by him and members of the Parish Finance Council.
- b. As required by Canon Law, this petition was presented to members of Diocesan Priest Council for consultation. The petition was unanimously accepted.
- c. Following Priest Council, I heard the opinion of the Vicars' General and received their unanimous consent.

Thus, having satisfied all the requirements of Canon Law, I am very pleased to announce the establishment of a Personal Parish for the black Catholic community in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, under the title of Saint Benedict the Moor Parish, effective July 13, 2020. In completing all that is necessary to establish a new parish, I am now able to move forward in determining clergy assignments for Saint Benedict the Moor Parish, and this announcement will be forthcoming.

As a reminder, the territorial parish of Divine Mercy, established by my decree on January 6, 2020, will remain a territorial parish with two church buildings: Epiphany and Saint Mary of Mercy. Father Christopher Donley will be appointed as Pastor of Divine Mercy Parish, effective July 13, 2020. Father Joseph Freedy will begin a new assignment as Administrator of the Grouping of parishes in Bellevue/Emsworth/Franklin Park effective July 1, 2020.

May I share with you that I am nothing short of thrilled by your request and by confirming this new chapter in the faith journey of Saint Benedict the Moor Parish.

Finally, as previously expressed, I very much look forward to coming to Saint Benedict the Moor Church to celebrate Mass on Sunday, July 12, barring any COVID-19 restrictions. Please pray that it may be so.

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,

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Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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