



## Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

May 27, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Saint Bernard and Our Lady of Grace Parishes:

On April 12, 2015, when I initiated *On Mission for The Church Alive!*, who of us could have ever imagined the ways in which the COVID-19 virus and crisis would affect every aspect of our daily lives? As we continue to live through many changing realities, please know that I pray for you daily asking our Heavenly Father to shower you with abundant grace, good health and much hope.

Despite present challenges with the pandemic, your parishes completed the merger process of consultation with parishioners, and members of your Pastoral and Finance Councils signed a petition to move forward with the merger plan. In turn, your grouping administrator, Father David Bonnar, petitioned me to merge the parishes. On May 7, 2020, the diocesan Priest Council and Vicars General gave consent to the proposal, and I have accepted these recommendations.

Effective July 1, 2020, your current parishes will cease to exist, and the new parish of Saint Michael the Archangel will take their place. Every member of your current parishes is now a member of the newly formed parish. Saint Michael the Archangel Parish will also inherit all of the assets, responsibilities and liabilities of the current parishes.

Saint Michael the Archangel Parish will be served by the following clergy team:

- Father Brian Welding, Pastor
- Father Benjamin Barr, Parochial Vicar
- Father Thomas Gramc, Parochial Vicar
- Father Gilbert Puznakoski, Parish Chaplain
- Father Michael Yaksick, Parish Chaplain
- Deacon Frederick Eckhardt

Your current grouping administrator, Father David Bonnar, will become pastor of the new Saint Aiden Parish in Wexford.

Your priests and deacon have worked diligently in service to you and to God throughout this process, and I am deeply grateful for their care and leadership.

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, you are positioning your new parish for more effective ministry by addressing financial needs, sharing resources and allowing your clergy to focus on the spiritual work for which they were ordained. With your faith in Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit, I invite you to warmly welcome and serve each other as you become one parish family.

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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