



Diocese of Pittsburgh

111 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1618

Phone: 412-456-3010 • Fax: 412-456-3185

E-mail: dzubik@diopitt.org • Website: www.diopitt.org

Office of the Bishop

November 28, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Saint Joseph, Mater Dolorosa and Saint Wendelin 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 successfully completed the merger process by presenting a Virtual Parish Assembly and gathering written and electronic feedback from parishioners. Members of your Pastoral and Finance Councils worked with your administrator to complete all necessary documentation for the merger. In turn, your grouping administrator, Father Matthew McClain, petitioned me to merge the parishes. On October 19, 2020, the diocesan Priest Council and Vicars General gave consent to the proposed merger, and I have decided to enact these recommendations.

Effective January 4, 2021, your current parishes will cease to exist, and the new parish of Saint Clare of Assisi will take their place. No church buildings will close at this time. Parish leaders and parishioners will need to follow a thorough process to consider which buildings will best serve the needs of the faithful and the community. At this time the name of the school associated with the parish, Saint Wendelin School, will not change.

Every member of your current parishes is now a member of the newly formed Saint Clare of Assisi Parish. Saint Clare of Assisi Parish will also inherit all of the assets, responsibilities and liabilities of the current parishes.

Saint Clare of Assisi Parish will be served by the following clergy team:

- Father Matthew McClain, Pastor
- Father Louis Pascazi, Senior Parochial Vicar
- Father Ward Stakem, OFM Cap., Senior Parochial Vicar
- Father James Kurtz, OFM Cap., Senior Parochial Vicar

It is important for you to know that after careful consideration of current realities related to the number of clergy available for assignment, and after thorough consultation with the above named clergy, I am pleased to announce that your new parish and the new parish of Saint Francis of Assisi will be served by the same clergy team with Father McClain serving as Pastor of both parishes. They have assured me of their willingness and excitement to work together in service to both new parishes.

Your priests 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