

To my St. Benedict the Moor church family,

As many of you may know, I am moving down to the Washington, DC area as I am getting married to my fiancée on September 5th of this year. It is with great sadness that I write this letter, as St. Benedict the Moor has been my home church from the beginning of my journey into the Catholic Church in 2017 until now. I will never forget the grace of having received the sacrament of Confirmation on Easter in 2018 at St. Benedict. You all have been such a blessing in my life and in my journey of faith, and have been a true answer to prayer, even as I know that so many of you have prayed for me. I have never felt so welcome, so at home, so loved, with any church family. From the first moment I have come, I have sought to bring others to witness the joy and depth of faith that you all have. Thank you for welcoming so many of my friends and family, shaping their understanding of faith and expanding their image of what it means to be Catholic. I am especially grateful for having been entrusted with gathering young adults and teaching CCD to the youngest members of our church family. In the midst of my sorrow in leaving, I am overjoyed that I had the privilege to witness St. Benedict the Moor become a personal parish for all Black Catholics in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman stated, "What does it mean to be black and Catholic? It means that I bring myself, my black self. All that I am. All that I have. All that I hope to become. I bring my whole history, my traditions, my experience, my culture, my African-American song and dance and gesture and movement and teaching and preaching and healing and responsibility as a gift to the church." It has been such a joy for me, as a Taiwanese American, to worship with you all. Not only do Black Catholics bring gifts of tradition and culture to the Church, you also carry the gift for *others to celebrate their traditions and culture*. To be a parishioner of St. Benedict the Moor was not to become a Black Catholic, but to bring my whole self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope for – to become the Catholic that God has called me to be. I am so grateful for that gift.

As I depart, I would like to leave an encouragement, an exhortation, and a prayer. The encouragement is to continue onwards with your hospitality and commitment to justice – this is such a sign of God's spirit at work among you all to the entire Diocese and to the world. I exhort you to walk the streets of the Hill District, ensuring that every neighbor knows that St. Benedict the Moor Parish is here to serve and love them. This is a prophetic vision that I know has been shared by many within our church and truly needs to be fulfilled – especially in the midst of this pandemic. Finally, my prayer for the St. Benedict family is for the children and young adults, that from these children will arise great witnesses of our Catholic faith and that the Lord will continue to bring in young adults and young families into the church. This is not a goodbye – God-willing my (future) family will have opportunities to celebrate with you all in the future! May the Lord bless you and keep you all.

With deepest love and gratitude,
Chris Hsu

PS: We will be livestreaming our Nuptial Mass due to the pandemic – if you would like to participate, Crystal and I invite you to join us at chrisandcrystal.life!