



ARCHBISHOP OF DETROIT

May 31, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I write today with gratitude for the many blessings God has granted the Archdiocese of Detroit during our missionary journey. Six years ago, we asked God to send his Holy Spirit upon us in a New Pentecost, to fill us with an unshakable inner conviction of the truth of the Gospel and a love that compels us to share the good news with those around us. Two years later, through Synod '16 we received clarity that God wanted us to reclaim our Church's missionary identity and we set out with a promise to trust and follow him.

We began in earnest the work of a generation, to unleash the Gospel in southeast Michigan and beyond. Last year, we announced the next phase of this missionary movement, a plan to transform our parishes and schools, making them places where individuals and families can encounter Jesus anew, grow as disciples, and be equipped as witnesses of the Risen Christ.

This continues to be our mission today, even now in the midst of a historic pandemic. The current health and economic crises have disrupted our lives and the life of the Church. This new reality has exacerbated some of the challenges we were already facing. Even before the pandemic, we knew that the way we function in our parishes needed to change. In addition to the shortage of priests available to serve in our parishes and the shortage of vocations for future ordinations, the parish structures we inherited served our mission well in the past, but they needed to be renewed and aligned for mission.

And so, in prayer and in consultation with others, I've discerned that now is the time to respond in faith to the challenges we face and to take the necessary steps to better equip our parish communities for mission. Over the next two years, parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit will join together to form new groupings called "families of parishes." These groups – these families – of three to six parishes will work together and share human and material resources to further advance our shared mission. This new model will allow *groups* of priests, deacons, and lay staff to better share their gifts and talents with their entire parish *families*.

We are not the same diocese we were six years ago when we began this journey. God has been at work in us, in our communities, in our parishes, and in our schools. We have learned to be more docile to the Holy Spirit. We have learned to walk with apostolic boldness and confidence in God. We are committed to working in a spirit of innovation and collaboration. And most importantly, we have resolved to place Christ and his mission above all else.

Over the next several months, groups of clergy and lay faithful will help me discern the leadership and governance structure of the families of parishes and the ways in which this new structure will help all our parishes become vibrant posts of missionary activity. At Advent, my hope is to announce the groups of

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parishes that will form each family, with the first of them expected to begin to function as a family in July of 2021.

I invite you to visit the website to learn more about this process and to sign up for updates. Please join me in praying for this very important step in the life and mission of our local Church. Let us give thanks to God ahead of time for the great work he is doing in our midst. God is with us. He has given us his Holy Spirit as the initiator, guide, and driving force of our mission.

Blessed Solanus Casey, Detroit's own priest, pray for us. Our Lady of Lourdes, protector of the sick, pray for us. And dear St. Anne, patron of our Archdiocese, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Allen H. Vigneron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit