



ST. DOMINIC CHURCH

Dominican Friars

77 East Lucius Avenue

Youngstown, Ohio 44507-1898



August 20, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

In his letter, *"The Joy of the Gospel,"* Pope Francis encourages everyone in the Church to be "bold and creative in the task of rethinking the goals, structures, styles and methods of evangelization in their respective communities (33)."

The Church exists to evangelize, according to Pope Saint Paul VI. An honest look at the situation of the Church today calls us, priests, religious, and laity, to work together to reenergize the Church and fulfill the mission given to us by the Lord.

In accordance with the Diocesan Plan for Pastoral Regions, promulgated in 2019 by our late Bishop Murry, a process is taking shape with the goal of creating more vibrant parishes through regional collaboration. As Bishop Murry wrote in April of last year, "The regional approach to pastoral planning allows us to think and act upon creative solutions that fit local needs. Rather than focusing on maintaining structures that have served our parish community well in the past, the focus now is on changes that will foster a greater vibrancy within our parish communities in the future."

Given the diminishing number of active priests and resources in our diocese, it becomes important to discern how we as a Catholic parish can best meet the needs of our people. Collaboration with other parishes is key when we think of programming, events, and outreach efforts. How does the faith community of St. Dominic meet the challenge of evangelization in new and exciting ways?

I believe an opportunity that the Dominican friars of the Province of St. Joseph are well positioned to embrace is in the area of Hispanic ministry. As a Dominican province, we are blessed with a number of young friars who speak Spanish and have a strong desire to minister to the Hispanic community. *The fastest growing segment of the population in the six counties that comprise the Diocese of Youngstown is the Hispanic community. In fact, in a few short years, Hispanics will be the majority of all Catholics in the United States!*

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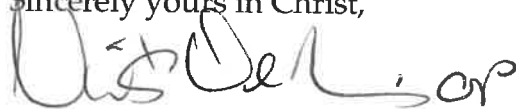
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To be sure, stretching ourselves ministerially is often a challenging proposition. The Hispanic community is a very diverse population. These are families who come from different countries and cultures. At the present time, the diverse communities that we've been asked to inherit are from St. Brendan and St. Rose of Lima parishes. They are seemingly leaderless and adrift, a community looking for a home. **My hope is that St. Dominic's will be a welcoming community to our brothers and sisters in faith, who need a place to worship each Sunday and a parish that they can finally call home!** At the present time, we are blessed to have Fr. Carlos on staff, who is fluent in Spanish. Initially and when needed, we will collaborate with Spanish speaking priests in the area to help with the celebration of the Sunday liturgy.

The Parish Council of St. Dominic's and the Dominican friars wholeheartedly support this new venture. They and I see this as an opportunity to expand our horizons as a parish church and pastorally attend to an urgent local need of the diocese. **With all this in mind, I am grateful to God in announcing that beginning on Sunday, September 20, 2020, we will inaugurate our first bilingual Mass at 1 PM.** The Mass will be celebrated both in English and in Spanish. We are currently working on the liturgy to make sure it is sensitive to both English and Spanish speakers in attendance.

Please pray for the success of this venture. In 2022, St. Dominic's in Youngstown will mark the centenary of its foundation. **As the Dominican friars begin a second century of service to the good Catholic people of northeast Ohio, let us pray that the parish will grow in ways that will continue to give glory to God!**

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Vincent De Lucia, O.P.

Pastor