

BISHOP OF STEUBENVILLE

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November 25, 2019

Dear Father:

Pursuant to my presentation at our Convocation announcing the inauguration of the 2020 Pastoral Plan, hopefully the following will be helpful in your preparation. Please accept my apology for the delay in this letter. As I had mentioned at the Convocation, I believe following a strict timeline is helpful to us in the plan's preparation while the calendar of events may be somewhat ambitious. With the amount of pastoral material we already have, I believe we need not engage in an extensive initiative as was conducted for the Diocesan 2009 Pastoral Plan. The 2009 Plan will be our "starting point."

For your leadership preparation, this packet contains:

- *2009 Diocesan Pastoral Plan*
- *2017 4 Pastoral Goals resulting from a Diocesan Survey and the Ad Hoc Task Force*
- *2019 – 2024 Diocesan Pastoral Plan priorities*
- *My **Steubenville Register** Article announcing the Pastoral Plan*
- *Pastoral Council timeline for Parish Deanery and Diocesan Meetings (Fixed Diocesan Council dates forthcoming) - (See Below)*

Parish Council Meetings

I ask that all Pastors in the Diocese conduct an initial Pastoral Council Meeting in the month of December and present to the council members the information contained within this packet. In order for us to have an accurate understanding of the pastoral needs of the entire Diocese, we first must be able to determine the needs of each parish community. Fruit of this parish level conversation will be critical to the discussion of deanery level needs.

As for the structure of the Parish Council Meeting, I suggest we begin with the 2009 Pastoral Plan and gauge how the plan's provisions have been recognized and what should be modified in the 2020 Plan. One question that could be asked how can we better address the 4 goals articulated in the 2017 survey as well as the 2019-2024 Pastoral Plan Goals at the parish level? Each parish is unique.

At this first meeting, a layperson should be designated as the parish pastoral council representative for the deanery and diocesan levels.

Deanery Level

Each Dean within our Diocese should conduct a Deanery Meeting with the pastors and the lay pastoral council representative. The information shared above at the parish level is an appropriate start for discussion. I will be in contact with each Dean in order for us to further discuss the metrics and outcomes from these meetings. It is my hope that the monthly Deanery Meetings will begin in *January* and occur each month into the Lenten Season. Establishing a fixed meeting date ahead of time, especially months in advance, will be helpful for all priests and their pastoral council representative who attend.

Diocesan Pastoral Council

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will be made up of all pastors in the Diocese and their lay pastoral council representative. As mentioned in my article, there will be one lay pastoral council member for each pastor. This being said, we also are aware of many pastors shepherding numerous parishes and so there may be exceptions to the rule, which will be at my discretion. I hope to have meetings every other month beginning with February with all the pastors and their representatives. I will facilitate these meetings. You may be able to attend these meetings via the internet. After further discussion following our Convocation, it seems to me *June, 2020* would be a good time to bring our meetings to a close with the “launching” of the plans scheduled for *September*.

Eucharistic Adoration

Our Diocesan 75th Anniversary will conclude with a Eucharistic Congress in the fall of 2020. Preparations are being made with the intent we keep the celebration limited in scope due to the size and population of our diocese.

This being said, I instruct that if a parish does not already celebrate Eucharistic Adoration on a regular basis that it begin to do so. Since our parishes do not have the resources to celebrate frequently Eucharistic Adoration, such as for 24 hours each week, it would be prudent to join with other parishes for a fixed time one day each week for a fixed period of time, such as an hour or more.

This celebration could rotate weekly among the parishes. Prayer must accompany our deliberation and the Eucharist is central to both our Catholic faith and identity.

Conclusion

It is my hope as together we embark into the preliminary discussion of the 2020 Pastoral Plan, it seems to me that we have more than enough material available for discussion. As stated frequently by Pope St John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, our discipleship depends on how effectively we share the New Evangelization with our brothers and sisters. Our missionary discipleship should anticipate the continued changing demographics of our Diocese, namely an aging and

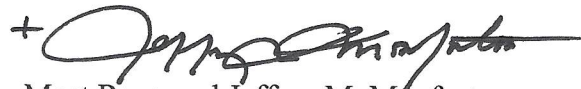
declining number in our clergy, as well as an aging and declining Catholic population consistent with other dioceses in the so-called rust belt of our nation.

Please know of my gratitude as we undertake this pastoral endeavor, which further defines us, as our principle goal is not maintaining decline, but missionary proclamation of the Gospel: Yes, *mission, not maintenance*.

While we will have regular Diocesan Meetings that could be helpful venue for discussion and clarification of our Pastoral Plan preparations, the size of our Diocese permits me with asking you to contact my office if you have any questions instead of waiting for a Diocesan Meeting to occur.

In gratitude for your pastoral leadership and assistance, and entrusting our beloved Diocese this 75th Anniversary to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I remain,

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey M. Monforton", preceded by a small cross symbol.

Most Reverend Jeffrey M. Monforton
Bishop of Steubenville

cc: Reverend Joseph Lehman, TOR
Reverend Dave Pivonka, TOR
Reverend Luke Robertson, TOR
Reverend Angelo Casimiro, MIC
Reverend Ludwig Oppl, ORC
Mother Mary Ann Kessler, TOR
Mother Visitación de Maria Martinez, HSMCJ
Mother Maria Benigna Fischer, OA