



Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Apostolic Administrator

June 19, 2025

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I write to you today with a sincere heart, both as your bishop and as your brother in the Lord. I join you in gratitude for the ministry of Father Canice McMullen, OSB, a Benedictine priest of Saint Vincent Archabbey. On the recommendation of his Archabbot, and with my approval, I appointed him your pastor in 2022.

His transfer and recall to the Archabbey was not arrived at lightly. It is the result of several conversations between Archabbot Martin with Father Canice and myself regarding personal personnel matters. I can assure you, to the best of my knowledge, there are absolutely no immoral issues in his life. Were that to be the case, he would be removed immediately, and I would inform you of such. Any speculation on that matter is an unjust attack on Father Canice's good character.

I know this change has stirred strong emotions among many of you who have come to know Father Canice. Many of you have asked that his transfer be reversed. While that is not to happen, your appreciation for his ministry is also a sign of your love for the Church. For that, I thank you.

It is important to recall that at ordination, priests commit in obedience to go where we are sent, much as Jesus sent His disciples. Father Canice made this commitment at his priestly ordination and again renewed the commitment at the time of his appointment as pastor.

This weekend, we celebrate the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. It is a reminder that *we are the Body of Christ, one body, united by Jesus Himself*. That's why I must also say this: Some of the language and outreach I have received in response to Father Canice's transfer do not reflect the spirit of the Gospel. Each of us is called to examine how we are using our voices. It is imperative that we work together to build up the Body of Christ.

In addition, I have the responsibility to make sure that every parish in the Diocese of Pittsburgh continues to receive strong pastoral leadership. That certainly came into consideration in the selection of your new pastor. To that end, I have appointed Father John Gizler, a diocesan priest with many years of experience, to be your pastor, and at the recommendation of Archabbot Martin am appointing Father Gilbert Heater, OSB, a newly ordained priest, as an additional parochial vicar. I ask that you welcome him with the same openness and kindness you have shown to others who have served your parish.

We are so much stronger together. Please, join me in praying for Father Canice as he begins a new chapter in his priestly ministry, for Father Gizler and Father Heater as they begin their service to you, together with Father Celestine, and for one another, that we may move forward together with faith, hope and charity.

Know of my prayers for you. I ask humbly for yours as well.

Grateful for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,

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Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Apostolic Administrator

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