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Office of the Bishop

May 31, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As we celebrate this Seventh Sunday of Easter, our hearts are already stirring with joyful anticipation for the great Solemnity of Pentecost. We recall that on the first Pentecost, the Apostles, gathered in unity with our Blessed Mother, Mary, were filled with the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit, who showered the early Church with spiritual gifts, continues to be with us today, enabling each of us to carry on the very mission of Jesus. The power of Pentecost is not confined to history; it is a living reality within our Church, and it is with this in mind that I write to you today.

I have wonderful news to share about a collaborative spirit growing among the dedicated pastors of ten parishes in our City of Pittsburgh. Guided by their exemplary care as shepherds and with a shared desire to more fully embrace the Church's mission through working together, they have begun exploring exciting possibilities, both individually and collectively, for their parish communities.

The parishes and pastors are: **\*Divine Mercy Parish**, Father Christopher Donley; **Saint Benedict the Moor Parish**, Father Matthew Hawkins; **Saint Jude Parish**, Father Brendan Dawson; **Saint Mary Magdalene Parish**, Father Lawrence Adams; **Saint Paul Cathedral Parish**, Father Kris Stubna; **Saint Pio of Pietrelcina Parish**, Father Thomas Gramc; **Shrines of Pittsburgh Parishes (Immaculate Heart of Mary, Most Holy Name of Jesus [Saint Anthony Chapel], Saint Nicholas, Saint Patrick/Saint Stanislaus)**, Father Nicholas Vaskov.

\*(Please Note: Father Vaskov will be the Pastor of Divine Mercy Parish beginning July 1, 2025 when the deanery is established.)

These pastors are demonstrating how the Church flourishes as a richer and more effective instrument for God's purposes when we unite, sharing our unique gifts and talents. Their willingness and desire to collaborate provides a powerful witness to the world, enabling the Body of Christ to fully extend the love and message of Jesus to all.

To nurture the growing hope for collaboration in this area of our city, I am pleased to announce the formation of a deanery within the North Vicariate of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. This new deanery will consist of ten neighboring parishes, united by the common purpose of:

- **Fostering cooperation and collaboration** among the parishes within the area.
- **Facilitating communication** between the bishop and the local parishes.
- **Coordinating common pastoral activities** such as religious education, youth ministry, and outreach to those in need.
- **Ensuring the implementation of diocesan policies and guidelines** at the local level.

This new deanery, which will be established on July 1, 2025, will be known as the **Central Deanery**. I have appointed Father Thomas Gramc to serve as the Dean of the Central Deanery to help guide this collaboration. At the same time, Father Gramc will continue to serve as pastor of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina Parish.

The vision your pastors have initiated for greater collaboration needs to be a shared endeavor, enriched by your input and feedback. Your insights and hopes, as the faithful, are deeply valued and will be pivotal as we journey together to discover where the Spirit leads us. In the fall, there will be listening sessions in each one of the parishes within the deanery for information sharing and gathering feedback from the faithful. Details and dates for those listening sessions will be forthcoming.

I know that you will naturally have questions as we embark on this collaborative journey with our neighboring parishes. Please be assured that our initial focus is on intentionally finding ways to work together to bring greater strength to the Church in this part of our diocese. This first year will be a time of shared envisioning, careful listening to your voices, and prayerful discovery of how we can best unite our efforts for the good of our entire Church.

Finally, my dear sisters and brothers, I humbly ask for your continued prayers as we embark on this collaborative journey. May the loving hand of Almighty God strengthen our clergy as they lead and participate in this exploration, and may the gentle wisdom of the Holy Spirit illuminate every step we take. Let us join our hearts in prayer, asking that this endeavor will bear the abundant fruit of the Spirit, bringing honor and glory to God.

Grateful for our continued efforts together in being *On Mission for The Church Alive!*, and for our belief that “Nothing is Impossible with God,” I am

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David A. Zubik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend David A. Zubik  
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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