



Diocese of Pittsburgh
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Office of the Bishop

May 25, 2022

Very Reverend James A. Wehner
Rector
Notre Dame Seminary
2901 South Carrollton Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118-4391

Dear Father Wehner:

On April 7, 2022, petitions were presented requesting that the parishes of Saint Ferdinand, Cranberry, Saint Gregory, Zelenople and Holy Redeemer, Ellwood City be merged into one territorial parish to serve the combined boundaries of the three parishes. This petition was signed by Reverend Philip N. Farrell, Administrator of those three parishes, along with members of the Pastoral and Finance Councils of all three parishes. In light of that request and following consultation with the Priest Council, I signed a decree on May 23, 2022 which canonically established the new territorial parish of Divine Grace.

It is a special blessing for me to appoint you as the first Pastor of Divine Grace Parish and an additional blessing to welcome you back to the diocese. For the past thirteen years, you have served the Church in the United States in the all-important work of priestly formation, first as the Rector of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, and subsequently as Rector/President of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana. In both assignments, you proved to be a stellar leader in the Church. You were again a "feather in the hat" for the Church of Pittsburgh. Thank you. Now you return home to become a Pastor, a dream of most priests.

In accord with Canon 523 of the Code of *Canon Law*, I am pleased to appoint you Pastor of the newly established Divine Grace Parish, Cranberry/Ellwood City/Zelenople, for a term of six years. This assignment becomes effective on Friday, July 1, 2022, thirteen years exactly to the date you began your service at the Josephinum.

I am thrilled by your excitement to begin this new responsibility and have every confidence that you will provide appropriate pastoral leadership at the new Divine Grace Parish. I am also convinced that your parishioners will cooperate with you. I know that you will assist them to grow in holiness and to work for the building up of God's Kingdom in the Church of Pittsburgh. I also ask that you give special attention to promoting and praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life in our diocese.

In giving you this appointment, I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude for your fidelity to the priesthood for nearly twenty-seven years, your nineteen years of dedication to the formation of future priests and for your share in my ministry to the faithful to this diocese.

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

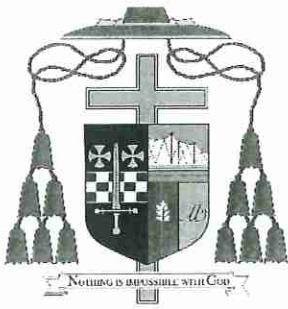
Your brother in Christ,

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Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

DAZ/phs

cc: Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Very Reverend Howard W. Campbell, VE
Very Reverend John B. Gizler III, VE



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Office of the Bishop

May 28, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Saint Ferdinand, Saint Gregory and Holy Redeemer Parishes:

It is my prayer that the promise of Easter, realized in our Lord's Resurrection, has filled your hearts and homes with much joy. As we look to Pentecost, may your faith continue to grow and be strengthened by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As you may recall, on April 12, 2015, I called all the faithful of the Church of Pittsburgh to journey with me in the *On Mission for The Church Alive!* initiative so that we could focus the resources of our parishes on mission and ministry. Since that time, the faithful of our diocese have prayed and planned about how best to serve God and His people through vibrant parishes and effective ministries, hoping that all people might come to learn, love and live Jesus.

Despite the most recent challenges with the pandemic, your parishes successfully completed the merger process by presenting Parish Assemblies and gathering written and electronic feedback from parishioners. Members of your Pastoral and Finance Councils worked with your administrator to complete all necessary documentation for the merger. In turn, your grouping administrator, Father Philip N. Farrell, petitioned me to merge the parishes. On April 7, 2022, after consulting with the diocesan Priest Council and Vicars General, I have given consent to the proposed merger and decided to enact these recommendations.

Effective July 1, 2022, your current parishes will cease to exist, and the new parish of **Divine Grace** will take their place. No church buildings will close at this time. At this time the name of the school associated with the parish, Saint Gregory School, will not change.

Every member of your current parishes is now a member of the newly formed Divine Grace Parish. Divine Grace Parish will also inherit all of the assets, responsibilities and liabilities of the current parishes.

Today, I must also share with you that after much consideration, prayer and discernment, I have decided to appoint a new pastor to Divine Grace Parish, effective July 1, 2022. Your current administrator, Father Philip N. Farrell, has accepted my request that he serve as Regional Vicar of the North Vicariate, also effective July 1, 2022. Father Farrell has faithfully and diligently served you in bringing the merger process to completion. I am deeply grateful for his leadership and ministry to you.

Divine Grace Parish will be served by the following clergy team:


- Father James A. Wehner, Pastor
- Father Mark L. Thomas, Senior Parochial Vicar
- Father David J. Egan, Parochial Vicar
- Father John P. Gallagher, Senior Priest
- Deacon Jeffrey J. Ludwikowski
- Deacon Donald C. Pepe

Please pray for the new clergy team as they minister to you and the local communities in which your parishes reside.

This has not been a simple task. Jesus never promised that it would be easy to carry his message of love and mercy to others. He was clear that sacrifice would be necessary. However, you are positioning your new parish for more effective ministry by tending to evangelization and mission, sharing resources and allowing your clergy to focus on the spiritual work for which they were ordained. With your faith in Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit, I invite you to warmly welcome and serve each other as you become one parish family.

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,

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Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh