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Office of the Bishop

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My Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we celebrate the holy season of Lent, I pray that the Church's yearly remembrance of Our Lord's passion, death and resurrection will strengthen and renew your faith. Please know of my prayers for you today and throughout the entire forty days of Lent.

It is hard to believe that five years have passed since we formally initiated our planning effort, *On Mission for The Church Alive!*, with the hope of bringing together parishes to align human and financial resources, create greater vibrancy, and strengthen our efforts in hospitality and welcome. Through the hard work and dedication not only of our clergy, but all the lay leaders and parishioners, and with only two Groupings left to merge, we will complete this process within the next year.

With our structure well established, we must now "double down" in the exciting work of evangelization and mission so that all people may come to learn, love and live Jesus.

At the core of EVANGELIZATION, regardless of particular circumstances, the one constant factor is this: **Evangelization is fostering relationship with Jesus Christ in and through the community of Jesus, the Church.** For those of us who practice and live our Catholic faith, evangelization is a call to ongoing growth and renewed conversion. For those who have stopped practicing their faith, it is a call to reconciliation. For children, it is a call to be formed into disciples through the family's faith life and faith formation. For those who have no faith, it is a call to conversion to know Christ Jesus and thus experience a change to new life with Christ and his Church.

Fostering a relationship with Jesus is the very reason why I have rekindled our partnership with Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) and why every parish will be participating in the Disciple Maker Index from February 22–March 31, 2023. This 75-question survey is a tool that invites you to reflect on where you are on your journey of discipleship. It also enables parish leadership to make data-driven decisions in pastoral planning that will help parishioners grow in faith.

To this end, I urge every parishioner (18 years and older) to participate in the DMI by taking the survey. Directions for access to the survey can be found in your bulletins and on your websites.

Once every parish has the opportunity to review and understand the DMI results, the parishes will be ready to begin creating a Pastoral Plan. The Pastoral Plan will shift in focus from "maintenance-driven" to "mission-driven" action. More information about Pastoral Planning will be included in next week's bulletin.

In closing, I remind you that the work of evangelization is all of ours. To that end, I pray that together we unify our efforts of bringing people to personal conversion and helping others to become and make disciples for Jesus. Now is the time for us to renew our parishes to promote spiritual maturity, to embrace our baptismal call to holiness and to embrace a missionary impulse that sends us forth to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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