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Reimagining the Diocese of Pittsburgh

January 15, 2019

From Jon Delano, President, Diocesan Council

What is God calling us to do here in the Diocese of Pittsburgh in the 21st century, and how can we redesign the tools in this diocese that can most effectively help us answer that call?

In a very real sense that is the mission of a Diocesan-wide task we are about to undertake in **Project CREED** -- "Committee to Re-Envision the Diocese of Pittsburgh" -- sometimes referred to as our Mutual Ministry Review.

Under the leadership of Bishop McConnell, the three leadership groups of the diocese -- the Board of Trustees, the Diocesan Council, and the Standing Committee -- have embraced a process that could, if we choose, lead to substantive change in this diocese. That change could affect all of us in a number of ways. Because of that, every member of this diocese is invited to be part of this review. In the end, whatever recommendations are made will be presented for debate and approval by your deputies at the 2019 Diocesan Convention next November.

The Bishop has asked me to serve as Team Leader with the expert skill and guidance of an outside consultant, Judy Stark, from St. Petersburg, Florida. Judy, who has consulted on 16 bishop searches across the nation, brings a wealth of knowledge of the broader Church and how dioceses approach the issues we confront.

Let me be clear. We are not undertaking a study to be filed away in some church archive. This is a comprehensive review that will lead to an "action plan" for consideration at our next Convention.

We have identified four target areas:

- **Governance -- Rightsizing the Structures of the Diocese**
- **Mutual Ministry Within -- New Initiatives for a 21st Century Church**
- **Mutual Ministry Outreach -- Reaching Out to Our Neighbors**
- **Communications -- Strengthening Trust Through Contact**

To be successful, we need you -- lay and clergy -- of all ages, race, gender, geography, ideas, opinions, and desires -- to join us, if you can, by participating in one of these four Working Groups, described in more detail below. If you'd like to be part of Project CREED, please let me know at jon.delano@verizon.net and then plan to join us at **7 p.m. on Tuesday, January 29, at Christ Church, North Hills.**



At this meeting, we will discuss how best to advance Project CREED and assign those who wish to one of these four Working Groups, as described here:

Group I: Governance -- Rightsizing the Structures of the Diocese

Our governance structure, set by the Canons, may be too cumbersome for a diocese of our size. How can we right-size our elected and appointed Diocesan bodies to reflect current needs, insure diversity, respect geography, and guide us into a 21st century model of leadership, lay and ordained? What works best to build trust and collaboration among parishes, guard against a Pittsburgh-centric governance structure, and remove barriers to entry for all to participate in our governance?

Group II: Mutual Ministry Within -- New Initiatives for a 21st Century Church

In a changing world, we need to dig deep and reach out with new ministries, perhaps unique to particular parishes and aimed at growing our Church. How can we foster new ministries within, support them both financially and otherwise, and encourage congregations to tap into the resources available? How can the Bishop and his staff best assist *us* as we increase our capacity for mission and formation— *to Love, Teach and Heal in the Name of Jesus Christ*?

Group III: Mutual Ministry Outreach -- Reaching Out to our Neighbors

Our diocese does not operate in isolation. All of our congregations are placed within larger communities of diverse beliefs. Our neighbors are Christian and non-Christian and, increasingly, not religious at all. How can we discover who they are, minister in our neighborhoods, find strategic partners, and identify local needs and resources? How can we define not only "who is our neighbor," but also how we can be "good neighbors" in our own communities?

Group IV: Communications -- Strengthening Trust through Contact

Trust depends on constant communication and sharing of information, which is not solely the responsibility of the governing bodies. Building trust requires a commitment to sharing information across parish lines about the work we are doing both together and independently. How can we build and strengthen that trust through 21st Century communication tools? What kind of information should be shared, and how can we facilitate parishes getting to know, connect, and respect each other's contributions to the diocese? How can the Bishop and his staff further support this important work?

Will you join us in this undertaking, giving your advice, guidance, and input? If not, can you recommend others whose skills might be invaluable in this review?

The opportunity to conduct a comprehensive Diocesan review like this is extraordinary. I invite you to join this process, and, above all, I invite your prayers for our success. As Bishop McConnell has said, this process holds the promise of bringing us together as a diocese and to multiply the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, as we seek to *love, teach and heal in the name of Jesus Christ*.

Thank you for your leadership, guidance, and prayers!

