

LOVE. TEACH. HEAL.

Our Mission Guided by the Love of Jesus Christ

A Letter to the Diocese from the Bishop

The Feast of Saint John of Damascus
December 4, 2019

My dear friends and colleagues in the Diocese of Pittsburgh,

Today is the 36th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood, and I am now well into my eighth year among you as your bishop. These facts seem hardly possible, especially that my time here has passed so quickly; that I am now 66 years old; that we have been through so much, accomplished so much, in what seems to me the twinkling of an eye.



However, I know it is now time for me to plan for the future – yours and my own. With the consent of the Presiding Bishop, I am calling for the election of the ninth Bishop of Pittsburgh, who will be consecrated on April 24, 2021. I will remain the Ecclesiastical Authority, and will retain full jurisdiction, until the moment I hand the crozier to my successor on that day, which will also be the effective date of my retirement.

I have not come to this decision lightly. I have prayed long and hard over it, particularly during my sabbatical. But I know that by April of 2021, I will have done what God called me here to do. We have built a beautiful vision together, and you will need a leader who will have the energy and stamina to carry it forward over the next several years.

Betsy and I have made sturdy friendships across the eight counties and thirty-six congregations of this diocese. We will miss you all very much, more than we can say. We have shared so many stories, have prayed and wept and laughed with you on so many joyous occasions.

There have also been hard times, times when the voice of the Church needed to be lifted up in the midst of a hurting world, and you have trusted me to be a part of your voice. When I add them all up, the painful moments recede, and the joyful times spring into the foreground with a power that fills me with astonishment and gratitude. For this and so many other reasons, serving as your bishop has been the greatest privilege of my life.

This announcement initiates a process with clear canonical requirements and a well-tested timeline, all of which will be discussed with the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council at their regular meetings next Tuesday, December 10, and then with the clergy of the diocese at our convocation the following day. I have asked Bishop Todd Ousley, the head of the Presiding Bishop's Office of Pastoral Development, and Judy Stark, our consultant for Project CREED, to join us for those gatherings, and they are glad to attend. Following a process of discernment and search, you will elect your next bishop at a special convention to be held on November 21, 2020, five weeks after our regular, annual diocesan convention. I have separated these two events to underscore the importance of our moving forward in the new work we have begun – in communication, in new initiatives, in meeting our neighbors, and in the reform of our governance – so that your new bishop will have a solid platform from which to lead.

I assure you that I will be completely engaged in the life of the diocese until the moment I am no longer your bishop, as together we continue to learn how to love, teach and heal in the name of Jesus Christ. In the meantime, please know you are always in my prayers.

Faithfully, your bishop,

(The Right Reverend) Dorsey W.M. McConnell, D.D.
VIII Bishop of Pittsburgh

