



Diocese of Pittsburgh

111 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1618

Phone: 412-456-3010 • Fax: 412-456-3185

E-mail: dzubik@diopitt.org • Website: www.diopitt.org

Office of the Bishop

February 2, 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Saint Katharine Drexel Parish:

In January 2017, Saint Katharine Drexel Parish was formed through the merger of five parishes to serve the Catholic faithful of Southeast Washington County. This merger was the result of years of collaboration between those former parishes, the diligent work of the clergy of those parishes together with an ad hoc Advisory Planning Team, and consultation among you, the parishioners. Since then, you have worked hard, along with your administrator, Father Edward Yuhás, to form a community of faith that seeks to reflect the love of Jesus in all things.

At that time, it was determined that all six church buildings of the parish would remain open, some being used for regular worship and some being used for occasional worship. However, because of the financial constraints faced by the parish, it became apparent that the parish could not afford to keep all the church buildings open.

In Summer 2018, the decision was made to establish a parish “Task Force” that would examine the need to close church buildings and make a recommendation about which church buildings would best serve the parish. The “Task Force” came to a consensus in October 2018 to recommend that the churches of Saint Joseph (Roscoe), Saint Michael the Archangel (Fredericktown), Saint Thomas Aquinas (California) and Saints Mary & Ann (Marianna) should close. The Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils unanimously endorsed this recommendation.

Throughout November 2018, Father Yuhás conducted six parish assemblies, one in each church building, to inform you, the parishioners, of the work and recommendation of the “Task Force” and solicit feedback. The feedback collected at those parish assemblies indicated that the parishioners understood the recommendation to close the four church buildings.

After final consultation with both the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, on November 30, 2018 Father Yuhas wrote to me and petitioned that the Saint Joseph, Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saints Mary & Ann church buildings be closed.

The diocesan Presbyteral Council and Vicars General reviewed the petition on January 14, 2019, and unanimously agreed with the rationale for closing the four church buildings. Receiving their recommendation, I have decreed that the Saint Joseph, Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saints Mary & Ann church buildings be closed for worship and relegated to profane but not sordid use, effective March 4, 2019. The Ave Maria and Saint Agnes church buildings will continue to serve the needs of the parish.

While I know this announcement is difficult to receive, I want to express to you my gratitude for all those – individuals and families alike – who have worked so hard over many years to strengthen and pass on the faith through good works and fervent prayers in these church buildings. At the same time, it is my hope that this decision will allow your parish to be properly resourced to focus on the mission and ministry of promoting spiritual growth through evangelization and faith formation opportunities and provide proper formation of lay ministers so that there can be a sustainable Catholic presence in Southeast Washington County. Be assured of my prayers as you to continue to work to build up the Church and share the love of Jesus with others.

Grateful 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/nsv