

ROAD TO RENEWAL

Real Presence. Real Hope. Real Mission.

Dear Family of Faith,

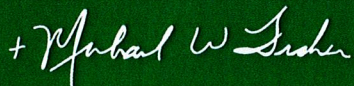
The work of the Holy Spirit calls each of us to constant renewal in our lives. This time in our church calls for an awakening of that spirit of renewal. The Holy Spirit needs to enliven our mission and passion for the Gospel, to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to invite others to become Jesus' disciples. The saving work of the Gospel is foundational to who we are as Church and must be proclaimed boldly every day.

With trust and faith in the Lord, our Diocese is beginning a journey together known as the Road to Renewal. This Renewal will inspire us to be a more vibrant, relevant and healing church that responds to the mission of Jesus Christ. Our Families of Parishes will help us to see where we as church can strengthen our collaboration, enhance our mission, and empower our people. All of us are invited to participate in this renewal together!

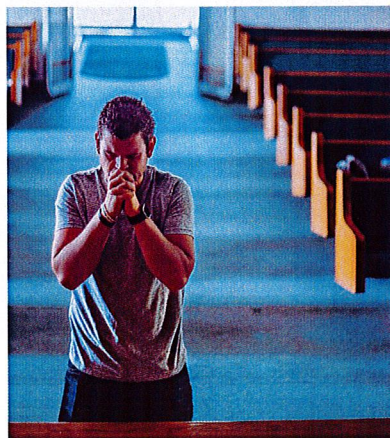
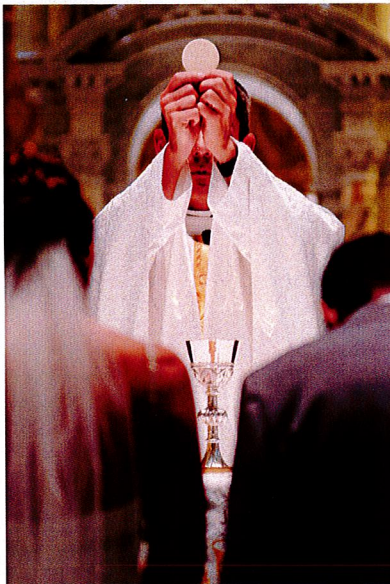
As the Risen Jesus encountered the disciples on the Road to Emmaus and transformed their hearts to recognize him in the Breaking of the Bread, we trust that the same Jesus will encounter us on our Road to Renewal and transform not only our hearts, but our parishes and our Diocese as well.

Please pray for the success of our Road to Renewal, and may almighty God grant us the grace to renew our commitment and faithfulness to the mission of Jesus.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo



ROAD TO RENEWAL

Real Presence. Real Hope. Real Mission.

What is the Road to Renewal?

The Catholic Faithful, priests, deacons, religious, parish administrators, laity and school leaders of the Diocese of Buffalo are embarking on a journey to reinvigorate our Catholic communities, more fully optimize parish and diocesan resources, and increase the impact of our varied ministries throughout Western New York. Much as the disciples rediscovered the Lord – and had their hope renewed – while breaking bread together after walking with him on the long road to Emmaus, we are traveling together, supporting one another, facing our challenges and opportunities together, and seek a renewed spirit of purpose and solidarity, united by our common faith in the One who makes all things new.

Reflecting and relying on the guidance provided by the “*The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church*,” as issued in the summer of 2020 by the Congregation of the Clergy, we seek to reawaken in each of us, and collectively as a Family of Faith, the zeal to proclaim boldly the Gospel of Jesus Christ in keeping with our baptismal commitment and to serve those most vulnerable with renewed vigor and uncompromised devotion.

Throughout this journey that we now travel together, our guiding principles will be to **listen** and to learn; to be open and **transparent** about the challenges we face, and **collaborative** in determining solutions that will ultimately lead us to greater dependence on and **support** for one another, while renewing in each of us the zeal to proclaim Christ’s Gospel of unconditional love and forgiveness.

How will this affect the lives of parishioners?

Parishioners will become part of a larger Family of Parishes that will share their pastor and lay leadership to increase access to Sacraments and ministries. Each parish retains its identity while benefitting from access to additional resources as they work together to strengthen and revitalize their faith communities, and outreach and evangelization efforts.

What is a Family of Parishes?

A Family of parishes will be a grouping of parishes that come together to form a Family. Each Family will contain 3 – 6 parishes, nearby worship sites, and local Catholic schools.

Will parishes close?

The goal of families of parishes is to strengthen parishes by sharing resources and personnel. There is no plan to close parishes!

Will this affect the finances of our Parish?

Each parish will maintain its own identity with its own name, trustees, and finance council. Therefore the assets and liabilities of a parish and the income of that parish belong to the individual parish.

ROAD TO RENEWAL

Real Presence. Real Hope. Real Mission.

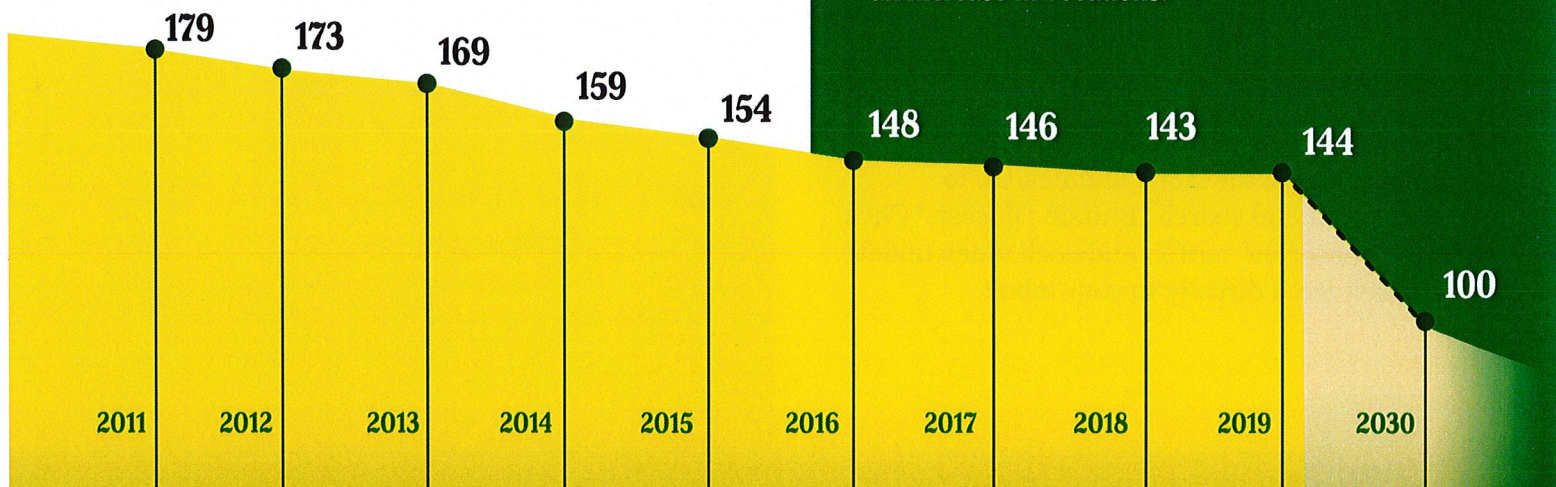
Core Areas of Renewal

As we look to the future we recognize the need for continued renewal among our parishes, our leaders, and the marginalized throughout Western New York. Therefore we look to engage with laity and clergy as we focus on the following core areas for renewal:

- Listen intentionally, and respond with opportunities for healing and wholeness for those who have been abused or wounded by the Church.
- Offer opportunities to revitalize our personal and communal spirituality, appreciation of the Real Presence in the Eucharist, and our sacramental celebrations.
- Re-engage parishioners in the life of the Church by volunteering in our parishes, outreach and service within our communities; and leadership roles within our faith communities.
- Intentional outreach and evangelization with those who have left the Church or never felt welcomed and engaged in parish life, particularly our youth and young adults.
- Develop a sustainable model of leadership for our parishes and Catholic schools that will support vibrant and engaging communities where the faithful can celebrate community; and live out the mission of our Church to form disciples and live the Gospel.

Number of Active Diocesan Priests

2011 through 2030



Why now?

The number of diocesan priests available to provide parish leadership and the Sacraments is declining. Diocesan statistical projections indicate that (*barring unforeseen circumstances or premature deaths*) by 2030 the Diocese will have 100 active diocesan priests to serve 161 parishes. **Families of Parishes** seeks to utilize our priests as efficiently as possible and engage the laity, rather than closing parishes. Certainly now more than ever we need to pray for an increase in vocations.

ROAD TO RENEWAL

Real Presence. Real Hope. Real Mission.

How can you stay informed?

VISIT

Log on to **RoadtoRenewal.org** for all information relating to the Road to Renewal in the Diocese of Buffalo. Find links to updates, resources and more.

PARTICIPATE

To attend upcoming Renewal events visit **RoadtoRenewal.org/Calendar**, or to add an event to the calendar please fill out the form located on the calendar webpage.

READ

The website resource page includes Renewal prayers and information. There, you can find presentations for pastors, administrators, Catholic school principals, and parish leaders. FAQ's for parish leaders are also included.

PRAY

Ask the Lord to help us listen, to forgive, and to pray with and for one another as we begin this process of renewal in the Diocese.

SUBSCRIBE

You can subscribe to the Diocesan YouTube channel to watch the latest updates. Go to YouTube.com and search "Buffalo Diocese." Click the red "subscribe" button and each video update will be delivered directly to your inbox.



What is the timeline?

September 2020: Apostolic Administrator Bishop Edward Scharfenberger formed a committee to look at how we can begin to renew parish life amidst current challenges.

October 2020: Thousands of people participated in consultative sessions through various mediums including Zoom, surveys, emails and phone calls.

February 2021: Bishop Fisher consulted with priests in each vicariate throughout the Diocese.

March 2021: Fr. Bryan Zielenieski was appointed Episcopal Vicar for Renewal and Development.

June 2021: Consultations regarding the draft of **Families of Parishes** began with priests, deacons and lay leaders.

July 2021: Parish leadership discuss and offer feedback on their Families by fall of 2021.

Summer 2021: Revitalization of our spirituality, outreach efforts, and re-engagement of parishioners.

2021-2022: Each parish will be offering *Leave the Light On* reconciliation, adoration, and healing Masses for their local communities.

Looking Ahead: The eventual roll out of Families of Parishes is expected to occur over a three-year period.