

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – FEBRUARY 24, 2019

Dear Parishioners and Families,

Tuesday the priests of the Diocese met with the Bishop and his staff regarding the plan for the Diocese in light of the diminishing number of priests. The proposal divided up the diocese into seventeen regions. These regions associated parishes together for the assignment of priests. St. Joseph Parish, Randolph was placed in Region Three called Portage South. It includes three parishes, St. Joseph Randolph, St. Peter of the Fields, and Holy Spirit in Uniontown. These three parishes will be assigned two priests. St. Joseph sits four miles south of St. Peter of the Fields and nine miles north of Holy Spirit in Uniontown. Only St. Joseph has a pre-school and grade school.

The priests discussed these proposals within their respective deaneries. The material has now been taken back to the Diocese where they will consider any new or advancing thoughts. However, it seems to me that the proposal was well thought out and the most practical at this time.

Jesuit Order Announces Its Universal Apostolic Preferences

St. Joseph Parish is not a Jesuit Parish but a Diocesan Parish. However, at this time both your Bishop and the Administrator of St. Joseph Parish are Jesuits. This means that we take any insights from the Jesuit Order that are useful for the management of the parish.

Wednesday I received a note from the General of the Jesuit Order with the Apostolic Preferences for the next ten years and these also were presented to Pope Francis for his validation. Pope Francis stated that these proposed preferences are in agreement with the current priorities of the Church:

- A. Show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;
- B. To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated;
- C. To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;
- D. Collaborate in the care of our Common Home.

When I consider these priorities in reference to our particular parish here, I feel we are going along this line. For example, we have talked about discernment within the fifth chapter of the Pope Francis's Exhortation *Gaudete Et Exsultate*. We have worked with the Food Shelf, support the Bishop's Appeal and also continue sending donations to the poor country of Haiti. Perhaps our most important work has been the renewal of our school, the parishes way of accompanying young people to give them hope and vision. This will continue to be one of our major efforts. Finally, we can improve our efforts and understanding of the care of this good earth, our Common Home.

Deacon Gies recently pointed out that several of the students in the Confirmandi group noted they wanted to be part of a larger effort or vision than themselves. In all cases we must try always to leave our parish, our area, and indeed the world better than how we found it. Our hope is to grow positively in the service of neighbor and our God.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
February 24, 2019