



St. Ignatius of Loyola Church

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April 2, 2022

My Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning in the daily bulletin (Bolletino) of the Holy See, it was announced that the Holy Father has named me as the Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus. I was informed of this by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, for whom I had the privilege to work prior to my arrival here in November 2019. I wish to publicly express my gratitude to Pope Francis and to Archbishop Pierre.

Today is the seventeenth anniversary of the death of Saint John Paul II, who described a vocation as a “gift whose purpose is to build up the Church and increase the Kingdom of God in the world.” With every calling or gift from God, there comes a task. Knowing my own frailty and weakness, the task ahead seems terrifying and daunting, yet I know that with God, all things are possible. I humbly ask for your prayers as I prepare for and begin this ministry of service to the Church.

Sadly, it means that I will be leaving Saint Ignatius far earlier than I had anticipated. The date of my episcopal consecration will be May 31, 2022. While I will be with you for Holy Week and much of the Easter season, preparations will need to begin for a transition for Saint Ignatius, which will involve the appointment of an administrator and subsequently a pastor as the Beacons of Light Initiative begins.

Change is difficult for everyone, but I have confidence in our parish leadership. It has been a privilege for me to work with Fr. Christian, our deacons, and parish staff. Our school leadership and teachers are outstanding. The lay men and women of the parish have exercised their responsibilities and their baptismal calling in serving on the Pastoral Council, Worship Commission, and Finance Council, as well as serving in our many ministries. In God’s hands, everything will work out for the best.

The circumstances which brought me to Saint Ignatius were difficult, but you were resilient. A global pandemic was another hurdle which we endured together and from which we are happily emerging. Cultivating greater stewardship, stabilizing parish finances, developing a master plan for our campus, and proposing new strategies for engagement have been part of our joint efforts as we have walked together.

I am sad to be leaving Saint Ignatius so soon. Someone recently sent me an email saying that I was given a gift in being appointed as pastor of Saint Ignatius; they were certainly correct. I have been a priest nearly twenty years. St. Ignatius will always be dear to me; it is the only place where I have been or ever will be a pastor. It has been a privilege and honor to serve you.

Grateful for your prayers and assuring you of mine, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Earl K. Fernandes

Pastor, St. Ignatius of Loyola Church

Bishop-Elect of the Diocese of Columbus