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# Diocese of Buffalo

## Office of Communications



April 10, 2024

## Statement on Request to the Vatican

*In response to the request from Buffalo area Catholics for an inquiry to the Vatican regarding Bishop Michael Fisher, we offer the following facts on Bishop Fisher's tenure in the Diocese of Buffalo.*

- The Bishop has done his best to be a spiritual guide in the diocese and has officiated at Mass at nearly all of the diocese's 160 parishes since his installation in January of 2021. He has a regular presence at grammar schools and high schools especially during opening week, and Catholic Schools Week in addition to hosting school events at Saint Joseph Cathedral.
- The Bishop attended a recent National Catholic Youth Conference and as a result a local Youth Conference will be held this month in Western New York.
- Under the Bishop's guidance, the Diocese with related agencies, has opened three St. Gianna Molla pregnancy outreach centers in Lackawanna, Niagara Falls and Warsaw to provide support for mothers and fathers.
- Although several ministries of the diocese had to be eliminated from the diocesan budget and transferred to parishes, or related entities, because of the Chapter 11 filing, the bishop has appointed a dedicated Director of Cultural Diversity who represents minority Catholics through African-American, African and Latino commissions. Also, longstanding programs with Catholic Charities address those on the margins which the Diocese of Buffalo wholeheartedly supports and champions. The Family of Parishes model has increased the participation of Spanish-speaking Catholics in Orleans County.
- The Road to Renewal is at its heart a spiritual renewal to bring best pastoral practices of individual parishes to the family of parishes model. Under Bishop Fisher's direction, each family of parishes hosts a **Life in the Eucharist** retreat to focus on the Church's spirituality and also the **Alpha** training program to engage parishioners in the work of evangelization.

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- In regard to recent announcements of closures, the Road to Renewal process identified longstanding financial issues that were brought to light, some which existed well in advance of the Road to Renewal effort.
- The Road to Renewal process has resulted in fewer Masses because, as of December, the number of priests who celebrate Mass has been reduced to 106 active, 50 retired and 12 religious order priests for 160 parishes.
- The Bishop was at the site of the Buffalo May 14 mass shooting, as well as on site following the death of Buffalo firefighter Jason Arno. The diocese sponsored an interfaith service for the May 14 shooting victims at Saint Martin de Porres Church, and the Bishop celebrated the funeral of firefighter Arno at Saint Joseph Cathedral.
- Contrary to the claim that there is no spiritual guidance under the current Bishop, there are many churches and parish families where spiritual growth is flourishing. For example, Saint Gregory Parish in Williamsville had more than two dozen people newly joining the Catholic faith on the Easter Vigil.
- The Bishop regularly records spiritual content messaging on topical issues through his Journeys and Insights series that is available on YouTube. And the Bishop's activities in the diocese are regularly documented on social media.

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