



Most Reverend Louis Tylka
Diocese of Peoria
Office of the Bishop

ST. JOSEPH IN IVESDALE

May 18, 2024

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we celebrate the great Solemnity of Pentecost, we recall the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and the birth of the Church. This gift of the Holy Spirit continues to be poured out upon the Church and upon us. I chose Pentecost intentionally as the day when we reach an important milestone in our two-year Growing Disciples planning process with the announcement about our parishes and churches. Thank you for your participation, your feedback, and your advice which have helped me make the decisions that are announced today.

I spent time in further prayer, study and discernment over the recommendations that were made to me by the extensive process of consultation which occurred. I have reached the following decision regarding St. Philomena, St. Joseph, and St. Michael.

St. Philomena in Monticello, St. Joseph in Ivesdale, and St. Michael in Bement will be merged to become one new parish, with a primary worship site at St. Philomena. St. Michael in Bement will not be in use. Masses will continue during the process of implementing this change which is expected to be completed over the next 24 months.

In the meantime, Msgr. Michael Bliss will remain pastor of St. Philomena and St. Michael Parishes, and Fr. Patrick O'Neal will remain pastor of St. Joseph Parish.

The implementation phase will begin in all parishes on July 1, 2024. I ask Msgr. Bliss to lead the implementation effort in cooperation with Fr. O'Neal. In order to adapt to this merger of parishes, it will be necessary to determine the new Mass schedule. I ask you to work with your priests to arrange a schedule of three weekend Masses between the two churches of the parish.

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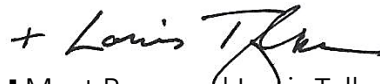
Website
cdop.org

I am asking every parish to engage in a process of renewal. Every parish is asked to evaluate its schedule of Masses, its programs of pastoral care and evangelization. I challenge every parish to be more intense in cultivating disciples. More information about this call to become a more vibrant parish will be released in the coming months.

I ask for your continued prayers and continued cooperation as we work together to strengthen and renew our Diocese in this new apostolic age. Know that I pray for you daily. May the Holy Spirit bless all our efforts to Grow Disciples.

Venerable Archbishop Sheen - pray for us!

Peace and Prayers,

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✦ Most Reverend Louis Tylka
Bishop of Peoria