



Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo

June 29, 2021

Friends, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings to one and all - and thanks again for taking a few moments out of your day to allow me to share the latest in my weekly Journeys & Insights update.

Just last week, I was delighted to enjoy my first baseball game of the season when my former hometown team, the Baltimore Orioles, came to Buffalo to play against the Toronto Blue Jays. Suffice it to say, it was terrific evening enjoying America's favorite pastime and I'm happy to say the Orioles ended a long-running losing streak with a one run victory over the Blue Jays. But even more than the enjoyment of one of my favorite sports, it was an indication that we're finally beginning to return to life as we once knew it before the pandemic. Mindful of those who have lost so much and who continue to experience real hardship because of lost wages, or protracted illness, we are right to be joyful and to embrace the prospect of new beginnings and renewed contacts with family, friends, colleagues and of course fellow parishioners.

We are continuing the engagement across our Diocese with the Road to Renewal work, and have made the determination that we need even more time to ensure that as many as possible have the opportunity to provide their insights and input. This includes, of course, our lay parish leaders, our principals and educators, our priests and deacons - all who have a stake in the future of this Diocese and who are vital to the renewal that is the responsibility of each of us to bring

about. And so, in the coming months, we will be further collaborating and discussing the implications for the "Family of Parishes" model, which is a key component of the Renewal work as you may have heard. It essentially means sharing resources from one parish to the next - enabling those with more abundant resources and capabilities to assist those parishes that are more challenged, either financially or otherwise. It also means sharing priestly ministry and ensuring that no parish community is deprived of regular access to the sacraments. Other dioceses across the country have successfully implemented this "Family of Parishes" model and the benefits are clear and undeniable. But of course, we want to pursue this in the most appropriate way for our Diocese and with the full input of all. I invite you to check regularly our dedicated webpage - <https://roadtorenewal.org/> - for updates and resources. We'll be communicating regularly on where we are and what we need from you.



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The readings of this Sunday remind us of our ultimate aim in bringing about Renewal - evidencing zeal for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and astonishing others with the evidence of God's presence and our witness to His work among and through us. As Mark's Gospel attests: "When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?"

It is God Himself who offers the gift of Faith and it is the option of each of us to accept and to live it conspicuously and in ways that leads and inspires others, and which leaves them astonished at what the Lord makes possible for those who love Him and live according to His will.

Finally - I would remind you once again to please take a moment to offer what you can as our annual appeal draws to a close this week for the wonderful ministries carried out by Catholic Charities and what is also accomplished by the Fund for the Faith. They provide for so much need in our communities, needs that have been even more exposed over the past difficult year. Thank you for the generosity of your spirit and for whatever gift you are able to share at this time. Simply go to <https://www.cwny.org/> and there you may designate your gift as you choose to support the work of Faith carried out each and every day across our region.

Thank you again for taking a moment to allow me to share with you. Please remember in your prayers all those who are enduring the tragedy of the condominium collapse that occurred last week in Surfside, Florida. We hold in our hearts those lost and those still missing and especially their families in this very difficult hour. May God in His living care, comfort them and grant those lost eternal peace.

Please be assured of my prayers for God's abundant grace and blessings on you and all those whom you love. I look forward to speaking with you again very soon!

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Bishop Mike