



Archdiocese of Newark

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 2019

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When I visit with parishioners, I am often asked, “What’s your vision for the Archdiocese?” For at least a year after arriving in Newark, my answer was, “I don’t have one.”

Yes, I knew the essential elements of the Church’s mission: proclaim the Gospel, pass on the faith, celebrate the Sacraments, and care for the poor. However, I did not know how those goals could be realized here in the Archdiocese in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Today, I have something to share with you: a pastoral vision for our Archdiocese called ***Forward in Faith Together: Our Road Ahead***.

Forward in Faith Together seeks to establish a positive path forward for the faithful, the clergy, and the Archdiocese while simultaneously addressing crucial challenges of the past and present. It is a foundation for healing that addresses the hurt and mistrust within our community, reinforces the changes we have begun to implement, and provides a firm foundation for our lives as missionary disciples of Jesus. ***Forward in Faith Together*** will ensure that we flourish as a community of disciples, companions of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Through ***Forward in Faith Together***, I envision a future where lay people are fully engaged in the life of our Archdiocese at all levels and where parishioners of every age play direct and decisive roles in our worship, our faith formation, and our service to those in need.

I also see priests united with one another and with the people they serve. I see deacons, consecrated men and women, and lay people who feel prepared and empowered to build up the Body of Christ that is the Church of Newark.

My vision for our Archdiocese is one of genuine solidarity in Christ. Our differences should enrich our Church, not divide it. The challenges we face should bring us closer together and allow the Holy Spirit to give us the wisdom, courage, hope, and generosity we need to be successful missionary disciples.

Archdiocesan Center

We have a responsibility to the Lord to never tire tending His vineyard. After all, the Church is His.

However, the road ahead will not be easy. The revelations of clergy abuse and allegations of mistreatment of seminarians have certainly challenged us all to find the light of Christ in our present darkness while looking to the future with hope.

We know we cannot proceed with healing until we have acknowledged the suffering and cleansed the deep wounds from the past.

Yet, the path forward must involve far more than simply measures to address past transgressions. It must include an agenda *for* and commitment *to* the future.

Forward in Faith Together is my vision for the future of our Archdiocese and it is supported by six key pillars, each representing an area of action that calls for our renewed energy.

Pillar one concerns the **Protection of the Faithful**. In February, we published the names of diocesan clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors in the Archdiocese. This was a most important step to help bring healing to the victims and restore trust in the leadership of the Church.

Pillar two focuses on **Accountability, Transparency, and Communication**. This pillar will explain how we will continue to provide greater transparency in the area of Archdiocesan and parish financial systems and property management.

Pillar three places emphasis on **Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning**. This will help improve direct engagement with each parish, allow us to be more responsive to the faithful, and create a stronger and more organized Archdiocese.

Pillar four recognizes the need for **Lifelong Faith Formation and Education**. The goal of this pillar is to create and support initiatives for the faithful to flourish in the human spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral aspects of faith throughout the journey of their lives.

Pillar five, **Ongoing Formation and Support of Clergy**, will help strengthen our continued commitment to the life-long ministry of our bishops, priests, and deacons.

Pillar six acknowledges the crucial importance of an **Active Engagement of the Laity**. This pillar will help us add more leading roles for our laity in the Archdiocese and invest in ongoing training and development.

I recognize that this is an ambitious vision and there is much work to be done. We will find our way together as disciples of Christ. Your God-given faith, talent, and

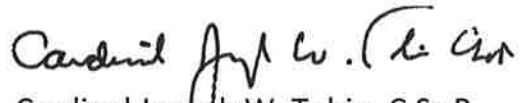
skills will make a difference. I urge all of you to engage in this process. Please speak to your pastor or parish administrator about how to get involved.

Now, more than ever, we need to depend on God's gracious care. Please join me in praying for all the faithful of the Archdiocese.

Please pray for me as well. I am deeply grateful for your patience, understanding, and support as we realize the vision of ***Forward in Faith Together: Our Road Ahead.***

May the Spirit of our God make us strong and wise. May God Bless you and yours.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,


Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark