ARCHBISHOP OF DETROIT

October 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Since July of 1701, when Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac first stepped onto the shoreline of what would become the City of Detroit, the story of the Catholic Church here has been written through the lives of God's holy people: religious men and women who served in our parishes, schools, hospitals and retreat centers; priests who dedicated their lives to ministering to God's people; and generations of faithful Catholics who have lived their faith through Word, Sacrament, charity and service.

What a story it has been.

Today, we stand at the threshold of a new chapter in our long and remarkable history. As you know, the Archdiocese of Detroit is in the second half of a two-year process of restructuring. This past spring, we shared draft pastorate models and opened the doors to your feedback. More than 40,000 parishioners attended 412 listening sessions, and 17,000 provided additional feedback through our online survey over the summer.

I would like to share with you where we are and what comes next.

First, and among our greatest treasures, our priests.
As part of the restructuring, all parish priests will receive new assignments, with only a very few exceptions—primarily the four newly ordained priests and five pastors who were newly assigned and moved in 2026. Our priests have been informed of the broad reassignment process that will take place next summer and have been asked to begin planning for a smooth transition.

I cannot overstate my gratitude for their faithful leadership. Their spirit of sacrifice, unity, and service is a powerful witness, not only to our local Church today but also to the generations of priests who will follow them. I know, too, that while we have great faith in the Lord's never-failing help, facing the reality of these priest transfers can be challenging.

Our priests forge deep bonds with those they serve, and those relationships are a treasured part of parish life.

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But this movement of priests is important and intentional. As we form new pastorates, we need to look at the needs of newly formed pastorates as a whole and match the gifts, experience, and abilities of our priests with the communities they will serve. This gives both our priests and our parish communities an opportunity for a fresh start together, laying a foundation on which ministries and relationships from prior communities can be successfully blended into one.

This approach of a true fresh beginning for all has proven absolutely essential in dioceses where restructuring has known great success. And while it asks much of our priests, it is a sacrifice they are making as brothers of one, unified presbyterate, for you, the faithful whom they are committed to serve with great fidelity. I ask that you give them your full support as they take their leave from their current assignments and, as these new pastorates are formed in July 2027, that you welcome new priests to your communities with full and loving support.

Second, a word about the pastorate models.
As you may recall, we began this process in the spring by releasing three to four draft models for each planning area of the Archdiocese of Detroit. Those models were a starting point for discussion and discernment.

We then gathered your feedback through more than 400 parish listening sessions, an online survey, and thousands of additional comments, emails, and conversations we have received over the last few months.

We have incorporated your feedback into a second round of draft models, now with two models for each planning area. Some models may be revised, some may be entirely new, and others may remain unchanged from Round 1. In late October, you can view these Round 2 models by visiting restructuring.aod.org.

Once again, these are still draft models. The pastorate groupings are not final. Rather, these models are an opportunity to see how your feedback is helping to shape this important process. I pray you will see in this next round of draft models that we truly listened, took your feedback to heart, and did our best to let it shape where we are today.

One example of your feedback was that the phrase "no weekend Masses" in the Round 1 models raised questions about what that would actually mean for the future of these communities.

As we move into the next stage of refining the models, we are now able to provide greater clarity. In the refined models, you will continue to see some locations identified as having "no weekend Masses." For those locations, this means they would be combined with another parish, or with other parishes in the pastorate, to form a single, unified parish community.

This is not a change in the overall direction of the restructuring process. Rather, it is a further clarification that is appropriate at this stage of our planning. It also aligns with

much of the feedback we have heard from you as we continue working together to refine these models.

What happens next?
In October, these second-round draft models will be shared with our priests and key parish leaders for another round of feedback. From there, the material will go to the Archdiocesan Restructuring Commission for its review and feedback. The proposal will then come to me for my own prayerful discernment before a final plan is announced in April 2027.

I recognize that behind every model, every recommendation, and every decision are parish communities that people deeply love and call home. Our parishes have rich histories, and they often feel very much like members of our own families. I honor those feelings because they reflect the love you have for your faith and for the communities that have nurtured it. That love is something we carry with us as we look to the future.

For more than 300 years, Catholics in Detroit have responded to the needs of their time with faith, courage, and trust in God. Through every season, generation after generation has found new ways to live the Gospel, worship together, serve others and pass on the faith. We are part of that same story today.

This moment gives us an opportunity to ask not simply how we preserve what has been, but how we best prepare the Church of the Detroit Archdiocese for what God is calling us to become. Our hope is to build on the faith, sacrifice, and generosity of those who came before us so that generations still to come will encounter vibrant Catholic communities where they can know Christ, grow as disciples, and experience the life of the Church.

We may not see every detail of the path ahead, but we know the One who leads us. Let us move forward with faith and confidence in Christ, trusting in the Holy Spirit who has guided the Church of this Archdiocese for more than three centuries.

And let us embrace this moment together as children of God the Father, disciples of Christ the Son, and recipients of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, united in our shared vision for the future: vibrant faith communities, flourishing priests, and sustainable, mission-ready parishes.

May God bless you abundantly.

+ Edward J. Weisenburger

The Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger
Archdiocese of Detroit