



THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

September 17, 2020

Dear Friends,

In the opening weeks of being your bishop, I have received a warm welcome from many people as I began visiting a number of churches and charitable organizations here in southern Illinois. Thank you for making me feel so comfortable. Please know that I look forward to getting to know you better as we share our faith in Christ with one another in the years ahead.

As a new bishop, some of the most important decisions I have to make are the appointments of clergy and lay people who can assist me in the work of serving the people of this local Church. The need for dedicated collaborators is particularly significant at this moment in the Diocese of Belleville, as I am granting retirement to Monsignor John McEvilly, who has served generously as the Vicar General for fifteen years. The Vicar General is the closest collaborator of the diocesan bishop and is entrusted with great responsibility.

Today I am sharing with you that I have appointed your Pastor, Father John Iffert, as the new Vicar General of the Diocese of Belleville, effective October 1. Father John is an excellent priest and a dedicated Pastor, and he is widely respected in our diocese. With his strong faith and many talents, I believe he will be an excellent servant leader, and bring a pastor's heart to the work of administration.

For the time being, Father John will continue as Pastor of St. Mary and St. Barbara. Yet, given the amount of responsibility that he will bear, there will have to be a change in his pastoral assignment. Very soon I will meet with your parish leadership and discuss the qualifications needed in a new pastor for St. Mary and St. Barbara. I pledge to communicate regularly with the people of the parish about the process for such an appointment.

The Church needs the gifts and talents of many people, clergy and lay, in order to advance the mission Christ entrusted to us at his Ascension. The Church, especially here in Belleville, needs good, holy priests to serve in our parishes. Please join me in asking God for the blessing of new vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Please join with me in asking our Lord to bless Father John Iffert as he begins this new ministry as Vicar General of our diocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael McGovern
Bishop of Belleville

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