



## DIOCESE OF COVINGTON

Office of the Bishop  
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February 24, 2024

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish,

My continued prayers for peace and unity among us.

I am so grateful to the many parishioners who attended our meeting Jan. 28. For me, our meeting was a time of grace getting to know you and of your devotion to your parish community.

Effective Monday, Feb. 12, I accepted the resignation of Father Shannon Collins, MSJB from the office of pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. At the same time, I have appointed Father Matthew Cushing as the administrator of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish while continuing as pastor of All Saints Parish, Walton. I appreciate the sacrifices of both these priests because of their love and care for you.

At our meeting I heard how you value daily Mass and frequent confessions. How attending Mass on Sunday was more than a weekly obligation but also a family celebration of community lasting hours after Mass had ended. It is my sincere intention to assist you in reclaiming that full parish life.

To that end, I am open to negotiating an agreement to return Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Park Hills. On their part, the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist have agreed to enter negotiations.

In the best interest of the parish, the agreement must protect those values which we discussed — stability and fidelity. The agreement must include some actionable assurance that the Diocese of Covington would have some stewardship of the church building. And, I must have absolute confidence that the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist will not interfere in or influence the life of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.

I regret that I am unable to give you a definitive timeline. I do promise you that this situation is a priority for me and my staff. You can anticipate that the parish will continue to celebrate Mass at St. Ann Mission until negotiations are finalized.

If I am unable to negotiate an acceptable agreement, be assured that I will continue to accompany you as the parish transitions to a second-best option. It is my intention that the Traditional Latin Mass will be available to you in the Diocese of Covington and that the full parish life you have grown to cherish may be quickly or gradually restored.

I thank you, again, for the sincerity of your faith and the strength of your love for Christ and His Church. Let us keep each other in prayer, confident in God's loving care.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John C. Iffert  
Bishop of Covington