

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



"We're Moving!"

We've all had that familiar life experience: making a move. It may have been the move after marriage into your first home, or after ordination into your first parish assignment. Perhaps the move was from one home to another, even one state or country to another. It may have been a move from high school to college, or from college to a first job, or from one job to the next.

Whatever the moves we've experienced, such transitions are never easy, and often marked by challenges. Statistics report that of the top causes of stress in one's life in a year, a major move ranks in the top five! As I write this column, "we're moving!" The long-anticipated sale of our Diocesan Pastoral Center to the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department has been finalized, as announced publicly in November, and as foreseen, our major move to a temporary location is underway. We anticipate being up and running in our temporary space by Tuesday, February 3. Diocesan and Catholic Charities services will not be interrupted while in our temporary space.



Our diocesan team had examined and evaluated several possible temporary locations, within the city and beyond, seeking the most accommodating, suitable, economical and practical space we could

find. Now we are delighted to announce that we are moving to our temporary space at the Fifth Third Building - One Seagate in downtown Toledo, where our entire Pastoral Center staff will occupy just one floor, the 23rd floor. Our work from this temporary location, for which we have a two-year lease, will also come at significant cost

savings! The Diocesan Pastoral Center has long served as the central administrative and ministry offices for all our nineteen-county diocese.

But before I continue, a bit of history is in order. It was in 1957 that Bishop George Rehring sold the then existing diocesan offices elsewhere in the city to consolidate diocesan ministries at 1933 Spielbusch Avenue in Toledo, where the Pastoral Center has been located since. That building was enhanced and enlarged by Bishop James Hoffman in 2002 with a two-story addition connected to the seven-story building.

It was back in 2020, that a Pastoral Center Project Committee had been formed consisting of myself, several members of the Diocesan leadership team, and the Diocesan Real Estate Committee. The Project Committee engaged several professional consultants and conducted a needs assessment and feasibility study of the current Pastoral Center offices, concluding that the space was too large and expensive for present and future needs. This is mainly due to a 47 percent reduction in staff over a period of years, which resulted in a 60 percent occupancy of the current space. Recognizing the importance of responsible stewardship of diocesan properties and resources as provided by the people of God, it became clear that relocating the offices to a more effective and efficient space would be the most sensible path.

Additionally, it was determined that to remain in the existing space for an extended period, significant funds would need to be invested to address key maintenance projects. Recognizing the importance of always being good stewards of our properties and resources, as provided by the people of God, it became clear that relocating the offices to a more efficient space would be the most responsible path. Therefore, alternative options were studied and evaluated with an emphasis placed on existing diocesan owned and vacated properties.

After regular and ongoing consultation with the Diocesan Finance Council and College of Consultors, the Project Committee identified an area adjacent to Rosary Cathedral as the preferred new location for the Pastoral Center offices. This involves renovating and augmenting the already owned diocesan property located at the corner of Delaware Ave and Collingwood Blvd. It was agreed that a move to this

location will prove the most effective use of existing Diocesan assets, will result in substantial overall cost savings, will enhance the Rosary Cathedral campus and will enrich the surrounding neighborhood and community. Further updates will be shared as this new Pastoral Center project advances.



As already shared publicly, the source of funds for this project will come from a combination of the sale of the existing Pastoral Center property, Mareda sale proceeds, grants, gifts and other financing. Intentionally, no funds for this project will be from parish assessments, offertory or the *Living Christ* capital campaign.

So for us, just as for all of you when you've made a major move, there is a mix of excitement and apprehension, of enthusiasm and anxiety, of hopefulness and trepidation. During one of our recent monthly Pastoral Center staff gatherings, I recommended that we all keep in mind four important words which begin with "p" to characterize how we approach this transition. Those four words are: prayer, patience, prudence, and perseverance! In hindsight, I think it would have been helpful to add a fifth now popular "p" word: positivity! As you can see, much work has been accomplished, and there is much still to be accomplished! So do pray with me that our transition be blessed and that our temporary space may serve the needs of our diocese, because "we're moving"!

+ *Daniel E. Thomas*

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