FROM THE DESK OF FR. ERNIE

Dear Parishioners,

I know there are still many questions about *We Are His Witnesses*. I want to be clear: this initiative is not about closing churches. Please read the recent letter from Cardinal Tobin about how the diocese will move forward with this initiative. The Cardinal makes it clear that we are **slowing down**. The input received over the past months has provided him with valuable insight and highlighted the need for further discernment on the part of all Bishops, priests, and laity as he states in the letter:
During the weeks and months to come, every parish must engage directly with the three questions that matter deeply for our future:

- Where are we now - truly and realistically?
- Where is God calling us to go?
- How will we get there together?

We hope to discover *"What does it mean to be a missionary Church in northern New Jersey today? How can we truly be 'a Church that sets no limits to love?'"* This effort seeks to do what is best for all within our archdiocese - the people of God - not just individual parishes or communities. We all have a stake in this process and must work together to fulfill the mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, becoming missionary disciples and a missionary Church. To quote the Cardinal:

"At its heart, We Are His Witnesses seeks to renew our identity as missionary disciples, strengthen parish vitality, and ensure that our local Church can fulfill its mission for generations to come. Evangelization and outreach, pastoral care, and long-term sustainability are not competing priorities; they belong together if parish life is to remain faithful and fruitful."

I ask you to listen to and prayerfully consider Cardinal Tobin's request:

The success of *We Are His Witnesses* will not depend solely on documents or committees. Each of us has a gift to offer: our willingness to pray, listen, engage honestly with others, and, in doing so, place the mission of God and the Gospel ahead of comfort or fear. Please remain engaged, open, and courageous. Trust that the Holy Spirit is at work among us. May our Archdiocese be continually converted by the Gospel and sent forth to proclaim Christ, serve our communities, and invite all to abundant life.

Sincerely, In the love of Christ,
Fr. Ernie