



Roman Catholic
Diocese of Tucson

Office of the Bishop

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May 20, 2021

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of Our Lady of LaVang Parish,

I pray this letter finds you well. As the Easter Season draws to a close I pray that the Holy Spirit will linger in your midst and empower you to new and wonderful ways of discipleship.

In recent weeks I met with parish leadership from St. Frances Cabrini Parish here in Tucson. Their weekend Mass attendance has been declining steadily and they have not been able to pay their bills without going into savings, which are quickly being depleted. The parish has a rich and vibrant history but they find themselves with large parishes around them and declining membership. I do not want to close the parish for many reasons but primarily because many of the remaining parishioners have been there for decades. I also am motivated to maintain the parish as the facility is beautiful and in good shape. It would be sad to close the parish and sell the property. With all this in mind I recalled that your parish has long been considering the purchase of a new site or possibly building a new church and parish center. For this reason I am now considering transferring the Parish of Our Lady of LaVang to the St. Frances Cabrini location. I must stress, however, that no final decisions have been made and I continue to be in discussion with leadership for both parishes.

There is a similar situation in Tucson that came to a very good resolution several years ago. Holy Family Parish, near downtown Tucson, found its membership decreasing substantially along with an inability to meet financial obligations. In their case the Latin-Mass community, St. Gianna's Oratory, established itself at the Holy Family parish site and assumed administration and responsibility for it. In return, they provide a weekly Sunday Mass in the Ordinary form (English) for the remaining original parishioners. It is a model of parish life that has worked well.

I do not wish to rush this process of discernment. For that reason I am appointing Fr. Balaswamy "Bala" Kommathoti as Parish Administrator of St. Frances Cabrini Parish while maintaining his residence at Sts. Peter & Paul Parish in Tucson. Fr. Bala will be responsible for general pastoral care, Masses, and parish administration at St. Frances Cabrini until a more permanent plan is established.

At this time I humbly ask for your prayers that the Holy Spirit will inspire us to a clear understanding of the best future for each parish community. In return, be assured of my prayers for you.

May God bless you abundantly.

Very sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger
Bishop of Tucson