



---

June 8, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The peace of Christ our Redeemer be with you.

I write to you today as a witness to your deep faith, your love for the Church, and the vibrant diversity that makes our Archdiocese a sign of hope.

Yet, the realities we face as a Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Newark are both urgent and undeniable: parish membership, Mass attendance, and sacramental participation have declined. The number of priests to serve as pastors is decreasing. And still, the population of our region continues to grow, offering new and fertile ground for evangelization.

I believe the Holy Spirit is inviting us to something new.

Today, I am announcing an archdiocesan initiative called ***We Are His Witnesses***. This is not simply another program. It is a journey of renewal—one that asks each of us to discern, with courage, humility and faith where God is leading us.

Together, we will reflect on three essential questions:

1. **Where are we now?**
2. **Where is God calling us?**
3. **How will we get there together?**

This effort will focus on how we evangelize, care for one another in our parishes, and ensure our parishes are strong and sustainable for the future. This process calls for an honest evaluation of current practices and structures. Some ministries will be renewed; some parish alignments may change. Over time, mergers or closures will be necessary. These conversations and decisions will



not always be easy, but as members of one body—the Church – we will support one another throughout this journey.

To guide this effort, I have asked Bishop Michael Saporito and an Archdiocesan Planning Commission to collaborate with pastors and parish leaders across our four counties. But the success of this initiative depends on each one of us. I want to hear from you.

We have already begun by listening through a survey called the Disciples Maker Index —and we will continue listening in the months ahead. I invite you to be part of this journey. Learn more at **WeAreHisWitnesses.org**, where you'll find a brief video message from me and updates on our progress.

My friends, we are not alone. We are His witnesses—called to proclaim the joy of the Gospel in a world that needs it more than ever. I ask you to join me in this sacred work. Let us walk forward in faith, guided by the Spirit, and united in hope.

May God bless you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

