

## **Highlights of Bishop Malesic's accomplishments in Diocese of Greensburg**

As the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg, Bishop Malesic has brought hope, healing and connectivity to more than 140,000 parishioners in Western Pennsylvania over the last five years.

Immediately upon his arrival in the Diocese of Greensburg in 2015, he recognized the severity of the opioid epidemic in Western Pennsylvania. Countless stories from parents and clergy about young people lost to addiction prompted him to establish an Opioid Task Force which conducted a series of listening sessions that focused on education and prayer. His pastoral letter received national attention and, subsequently, dozens of parish-based addiction ministries were born. By God's grace, the number of overdoses in Westmoreland County has declined by 40% since 2017.

Bishop Malesic brought hope to thousands of people during the COVID-19 pandemic, announcing the diocese's first virtual Holy Week, which included streaming Masses and liturgies during a statewide stay-at-home order. As the pandemic continued, he established a committee to recommence in-person worship, which developed safety protocols for parishes and schools. He continues to stream Sunday Mass and encourages parishes to do the same. New evangelization tools including an email and text message alert system, online and printed resources for worshipping at home, and both live and premiered social media events helped to bring many people closer to the Church. Last year, on an average weekend, 78 parishes in the Diocese of Greensburg welcomed 34,000 parishioners to Mass. In just one week during the stay-at-home order, more than 100,000 people tuned in to watch virtual Masses across the Diocese of Greensburg.

Under Bishop Malesic's leadership, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg also offered a record amount of direct assistance to families during the crisis. With the recent school closures and the lack of free lunch programs, many children were impacted. In addition to the daily need of food for children, urgent baby supply requests were met every hour. At the same time, Catholic Charities responded each day to meet the needs of the recently unemployed struggling with rent and utilities.

Bishop Malesic spent much of his time bringing hope and healing to the diocese. Shortly after his arrival in Greensburg, a Pennsylvania Grand Jury was convened to investigate clergy sexual abuse. Bishop Malesic supported the release of the Grand Jury's report, calling for transparency and openness about the testimony from many courageous survivors of abuse within the Church who came forward to tell their stories.

The diocese organized a series of listening sessions because the bishop realized the importance of being present for people to interact with him directly and ask questions. Bishop Malesic

listened to the valuable insights parishioners had and gave them an opportunity to express their views about key issues of concern for the Church moving forward.

On Aug. 9, 2018, Bishop Malesic then released his own report called “The Higher Standards of Today’s Catholic Church.” In it, the diocese provided its progress update in order to share the many steps it has taken over the last 30 years to protect the children, youth and vulnerable adults in its care. It also included a sincere and open apology to the survivors of sexual abuse. The progress update detailed policies, including an independent review of clergy personnel files in order to ensure that no one who is or was the subject of a credible and substantiated allegation of improper conduct with a child or young adult is currently serving in any ministerial capacity in the diocese. It discussed the evolution of youth protection policies, including zero tolerance and the responsiveness to recent allegations of abuse.

In 2019, Bishop Malesic established The Diocese of Greensburg Comprehensive Reconciliation Initiative to help survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The initiative included a survivors’ compensation fund, an opportunity for survivors to have personal interaction with an objective fund administrator, as well as counseling, spiritual guidance and pastoral care for anyone impacted by clergy abuse in the Diocese of Greensburg.

Bishop Malesic said he wanted to do everything possible to assist survivors in the healing process. “Their stories, their pain and their anguish have had a tremendous impact on me,” Bishop Malesic said. “This was more than a fund. This is a commitment to listening and supporting the same people we have failed to protect.”

Bishop Malesic identified vocations as a strategic priority for the diocese. He assigned a full-time director of priestly vocations whose efforts are now starting to show great progress with strong attendance at events like Quo Vadis Days where men can learn more about the priesthood and better discern God’s call in their lives. A growing permanent diaconate program and the expansion of the International Priest Program to countries outside the Philippines have made a substantial impact on the missions and ministries of the parishes in the Diocese of Greensburg. Bishop Malesic also named a bishop’s delegate for religious to build stronger bridges with religious communities.

In 2018, Bishop Malesic reorganized the diocesan curia, wedding communications with evangelization and prioritizing multimedia connectivity. *The Catholic Accent* newspaper was transformed into a multiplatform news source. Today, it is also a magazine, digital news site and television show. His efforts to invigorate new evangelization have been recognized as some of the best in North America by the Catholic Press Association and received four Telly Awards along with dozens of Communicator Awards honoring excellence in spiritual communication by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts.

Bishop Malesic was thankful for the assistance of a recently established Men’s Ministry Team, that, under his direction, held the first men’s conference in the Diocese of Greensburg: THE WELL, Come and Be Renewed! The men’s conference was designed to draw men closer to

Christ by helping them to explore and strengthen their faith through presentations, workshops, open discussions, prayer and sacrament. In 2018, its first year, the event drew 600 men.

On July 1, 2020, Bishop Malesic announced that an anonymous donor committed \$2.4 million in tuition assistance this year for the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg. That is the single largest donation by a family that the Diocese of Greensburg has ever received in one year. This groundbreaking scholarship opportunity has been established for students who wish to attend a Catholic school in the Diocese of Greensburg called the Saint Pope John Paul II Tuition Opportunity Partnership. The TOP student initiative was founded by anonymous donors from the local business community who received Catholic educations and were profoundly influenced by Saint Pope John Paul II. The donors believe that their Catholic faith, education and moral foundation gave them a great advantage in life. Their commitment combined with \$1.7 million in existing funds donated by more than 100 other individuals and businesses participating in Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program now make \$4.1 million in scholarships and tuition assistance available for the 12 Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Greensburg.