



# DIOCESE of TYLER

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 2021

Dear Newcomers to the Diocese of Tyler,

I want to welcome you wholeheartedly to East Texas and the Diocese of Tyler. Let us pray that your move to the piney woods is filled with blessings and new opportunities.

I'm sure that as you get settled it will be very evident that you haven't found heaven on earth, but I'm also confident that you are coming to appreciate the community here. As a cradle Catholic who grew up in East Texas, I know that we Catholics can feel the reality that we are very much in the minority at times. But another aspect of the reality here is that we are surrounded by fellow Christians who take their commitment to Jesus Christ very seriously. The 34 years of the diocese have been a time for the Catholic community to gain significant influence even as we remain a minority.

I'm sure there is a long list of reasons that you have chosen to make this move and I pray that your embrace of your new home will continue to grow. We can all agree that there is much turmoil in our world, our nation and in our beloved Catholic Church. As your shepherd I want to be very clear that I am united with you in knowing that Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the answers to the turmoil that we face. It is disheartening that too many of our fellow Catholics seem to have lost their way but I am with you in proclaiming unabashedly that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

I have had the chance to meet some of you and I look forward to meeting more of you as you settle into the diocese. Since we may not have had the chance to meet, I wanted to share some basic points of our Catholic faith that I am constantly working to emphasize. We believe that the bread and wine at Holy Mass truly become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior. We believe that human life is sacred from conception to natural death, and that we must work for the sanctity of the life of the unborn. We believe that the sanctity of life extends to every facet of the human journey and that we are called to care for the poor, the immigrant and the marginalized. We believe that God has created us male and female. The confusions we see regarding this basic truth is not of God. We believe in the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment open to children. We believe in the moral teachings of our Catholic faith regarding the gift of human sexuality. We believe in the call to repent of our sins and seek greater fidelity to the Truth Jesus Christ has revealed to us.

Of course, these are only a few of our basic beliefs but I mention them because even within the Church there is too much ambiguity regarding these tenets. As a diocese we are working to teach the Good News of Jesus Christ and call humanity back into His Light. I am confident that you are here to join us in this powerful mission. Some resources I encourage you to acquaint yourself with include the following.

1. The Saint Philip Institute [stphilipinstitute.org](http://stphilipinstitute.org)
2. The East Texas Catholic Foundation [easttexascatholicfoundation.org](http://easttexascatholicfoundation.org)
3. Our diocesan website [dioceseoftyler.org](http://dioceseoftyler.org)
4. My personal website [bishopstrickland.org](http://bishopstrickland.org)
5. Bishop T.K. Gorman Catholic School (Tyler, Texas) [bishopgorman.net](http://bishopgorman.net)
6. St. Gregory Cathedral School (Tyler, Texas) [stregreory.info](http://stregreory.info)
7. St. Mary Catholic School (Longview, Texas) [stmaryslgv.com](http://stmaryslgv.com)
8. St. Patrick Catholic School (Lufkin, Texas) [stpatricklufkin.com/](http://stpatricklufkin.com/)
9. Tyler Catholic School Foundation [tcsf.net](http://tcsf.net)

I hope these resources will help you to get to know the Catholic community that you now call home.

Sincerely in Christ's Name,

Most Reverend Joseph E. Strickland  
Bishop of Tyler