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June 25, 2024

To the Faithful Living at Veritatis Splendor and Others:

My Dear Friends in Christ,

I wish you the grace and peace of Christ Jesus our Savior.

Today, I met with the board of directors of Veritatis Splendor, Inc., for the second time and I would now like to share with all of you what I shared with them.

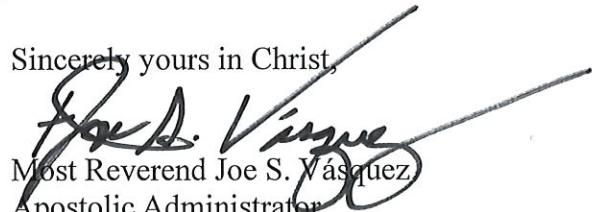
In May of this year, after careful discernment and significant prayer, I announced the discontinuation of the effort to establish an Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Winona. This well-intentioned effort, which began in 2021, had not achieved recognition as a foundation project by the Confederation of Oratories of St. Philip Neri in Rome. The two priests associated with this project are returning to their home dioceses or other assignments from their bishops, effective August 1, 2024.

With the end of this effort and the departure of the priests, the chapel located on the private property of Veritatis Splendor, Inc. in Winona will cease to be a location for the celebration of Mass. The private chapel on your property was opened in the summer of 2022 and I certainly appreciate that having this chapel in your housing community has been a blessing and a convenience for these past two years.

Now, I ask and invite you to make your home at one of the parishes of the diocese, as the Catholics living in rural northeastern Smith County have done for many years. The faithful residing at Veritatis Splendor live in the boundaries of Holy Family Parish in Lindale, but there are a number of parishes in Tyler and other nearby places where you are welcome. A parish is not just a church building, but a community of believers united with the local bishop under a pastor. The richness of the parish community helps ensure full participation in the life of the Church – local and universal. Above all, the sacraments, God's love fully revealed in Christ, are fully available to you there just as they are to all the Catholic faithful of the diocese.

Though not all will agree with this decision, I ask you to trust in God and continue to pray that his will be done in all things. I assure you of my pastoral solicitude and ask that you pray for me and for the next Bishop of Tyler.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Most Reverend Joe S. Vasquez
Apostolic Administrator