July 8, 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Four hundred and thirty priests of the Archdiocese of Newark met for four days in June to reflect on unity among them and with their bishops, strengthen the commitment made at ordination and offer recommendations to me aimed at improving our particular contributions to the mission of the Church. The theme of the four-day Convocation was Cultivating Unity. The Assembly featured an interactive, educational and spiritual process that engaged the entire archdiocesan presbyterate. Most of the priests gave the Convocation high marks, especially as a source of renewed energy – an evaluation that I fully share. This positive assessment is reinforced by the summary of the evaluations. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is “poor” and 10 is “excellent”), the average score for the overall experience of the Cultivating Unity process was 8.7. There is reason for great hope.

It was encouraging to see the impressive attendance and the representative diversity of the majority of the priests that serve the parishes and other communities across the four counties of the Archdiocese. We could discuss openly the critical issues in our Church today and challenges facing many of our parishes and priests. Creative ideas were shared to help us work through difficulties and cooperate more effectively in our pastoral responsibilities. The Convocation inspired us all.

In the coming weeks, you can learn more about the Convocation in a special report published in The Advocate. Included will be highlights of a comprehensive report based on the findings of a survey completed by many of our priests prior to the Convocation and compiled by Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

As we move “forward in faith together” we will continue to discover the many wonderful blessings that God has in store for all the baptized.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

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