



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

September 23/24, 2023

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear Parishioners of Christ the King Parish,
Dear Parishioners of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish,

In the coming days, Pope Francis will gather priests, religious and laypeople from around the world at the Vatican for the Synod on Synodality assembly. This will be an important moment in the life of the Church as people walk together, question together and discern ways to build a church where everyone feels at home and no one is excluded.

Similarly, the Diocese of Scranton began its *Vision 2030 Pastoral Planning Process* four years ago to look proactively at the realities of our local church in the present moment, while striving to meet the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade. The goal is to create vibrant parish communities rooted in the life of Jesus Christ.

As we strive to be a “mission-driven” church, we must all work together in a way that we best live out our baptismal calling in both a world – and local environment – that continues to change. Our Church faces significant challenges, among which are a fewer number of parishioners, financial sustainability questions, facility infrastructure needs and a diminishing number of ordained priests.

On October 24, 2023, Father John Ruth, Pastor, Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, Jermyn, will be leaving his current assignment to become pastor of a parish community in Susquehanna County. I am so thankful for his dedicated and faithful service to the good people of Jermyn for the last four years. At this time, the Diocese of Scranton is unable to provide another priest who can solely serve as Pastor at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish.

In recognition of all our Church faces, and after consultation with your Pastor and Parish Pastoral and Finance Council members, I am directing that the parishes of Christ the King, Archbald, and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, Jermyn, be brought together in a linkage, with a single Pastor, Father Ryan Glenn, effective October 24.

The process of linking two parishes together under the leadership of one pastor is something that has successfully taken place in many local parishes over the last decade. Lay leaders from both parishes will be brought together to form a Transition Team, assisted by Diocesan staff, to help your pastor determine a new Mass schedule and address any other questions that arise.

Because our pastoral planning efforts must also focus a spotlight on the next generation, I am also directing that both parishes begin the process of moving towards consolidation in the first few months of 2024. A parish consolidation is the coming together of two independent parishes to form one new parish community. A consolidation does not mean the immediate closure of any church buildings, but discussions may lead to that at some point in the future after serious study and prayer centered around the reality of finances, mass attendance, community demographics and infrastructure needs. As the time of the anticipated consolidation draws near in early 2024, what will be important is for all parishioners (from both communities) to have the opportunity to voice their thoughts, dreams and hopes for the future with the parish leadership team.

While I know change is never easy, be assured of my deep gratitude for all that you and your families have shared, and continue to share, in furthering the mission of the Church. As you know, our mission is to take Christ into the world. I am confident that by working together we can “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

Be assured that you are in my prayers as this process towards a new hope-filled future begins.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D, J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton