

+ May 27, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters of St. Mary's Parish,

Today I have issued the official decree to merge the parish of St. Mary's into St. Therese Parish, effective July 1, 2022.

Located near downtown Seattle, your parish is surrounded by a number of other parishes, some within walking distance. While the population of Seattle has exponentially grown, the parish community at St. Mary's has not followed the same trend. These factors, including several others, such as the lack of engagement in the sacraments and faith formation, and dwindling Mass attendance among other things, led to the recommendations for me to merge the parish.

However, before doing so, I asked the strategic planning team to work closely with your Pastoral Coordinator and the stakeholder team comprised of your fellow parishioners, to determine the optimal way for the parishioners of St. Mary's to move forward.

As you are well aware, there were months of meetings and discussions to determine which parish you would like to join. This was no doubt challenging since Spanish Masses were only available at one of the options, and you have a bilingual community. I share my sincere gratitude with everyone who has been involved in this process. Many of you have listened to the Holy Spirit and worked tirelessly to help your community move forward with hope.

Last week, I received the recommendation from your stakeholders that that you would like to merge into St. Therese Parish. I have decided to grant this request. This means starting July 1, 2022, St. Mary's and its food bank will be part of St. Therese Parish with Fr. Woody McCallister as the Pastor.

St. Mary's parish has been a welcoming refuge for immigrants, dedicated to social justice and outreach to the poor. These are tangible ways you are living out the Gospel and I encourage each of you to continue celebrating your faith to the full in your community at St. Therese. I know the parishioners at St. Therese are ready to welcome you so that together you can build a thriving community that shares the joy and love of our Savior.

Please know of my continued prayers for you. I pray that through these changes you experience the grace of the Holy Spirit and hope for the future. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,
Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL
Archbishop of Seattle