

Transition Update

January 2024

1. Decree of Merger

A formal **Decree of Merger** was issued by Cardinal Seán O'Malley on Dec. 28, 2023. It was announced at all Masses during the first weekend in January. The decree states in part, "Having presented all pertinent and necessary information to the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese on November 2, 2023, and having heard the same Council in accord with canon 515 §2 ... with dutiful concern for the spiritual needs of the Catholic community in Needham, Massachusetts and of the whole Archdiocese of Boston; I hereby decree the merger of Saint Bartholomew Parish into, and with, Saint Joseph Parish in Needham ... effective July 1, 2024." The entire decree can be found on the two parish websites.

2. Transition Plan

A transition plan for the next six months was developed by the Transition Team and reviewed with the parish councils and staff. The plan includes over 40 tasks in areas such as how to continue the culture of St. Bart's, how to combine ministries and roles that are redundant, and addressing logistical concerns at St. Joseph's. The plan is reviewed and discussed at each Pastoral Council meeting to provide input and recommendations to Father Bryan. We will report on the high impact / high priority items in these written monthly updates.

- a. **Mass times.** Since September there have been 9 Masses celebrated at the two parishes each weekend. A change will take effect on Feb. 18 when the Sunday 8:00 am Mass at St. Bartholomew's will be discontinued and the 7:30 am Mass at St. Joseph's will move to 8:00 am. No other Mass changes are expected until the merger completes in July.
- b. **Parking.**
 - Five portable yellow signs are put on along May Street for weekend Masses at St. Joe's. These spots are designated for elderly and handicapped parking.
 - The town of Needham has informed us that the Emery Grover building parking lot adjacent to St. Joseph Church will be available for Mass parking on weekends starting in August, 2024.
 - Plans are in progress for redoing the parking lot behind St. Joseph Church.
- c. **Coffee with the Pastor.** On Sunday, January 28 after the 11:30 Mass, parishioners are welcome to join Fr. Bryan in Ward Hall for questions and conversation.
- d. **Sale of St. Bart's property.** Discussions are underway between the Archdiocese of Boston and St. Sebastian's regarding the sale of the property. Ted English of the Pastoral Council is gathering input from the St. Bart's community on requests we may want included in the sale agreement. Examples include religious articles, decorative items, as well as access to certain facilities in the future such as classrooms and Ward Hall.

This update was prepared by the Transition Team members Nadine Kocho, Kathy Reilly, Jill Meyers, John Wallace, and Deacon Bob Horne, with the approval of Fr. Bryan Parrish.