

A Letter from Your Pastor: Beginning Our Journey of Collaboration

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I write to you today, my heart is filled with gratitude for the warm welcome you have extended to me as your new pastor. In these first weeks among you, I have witnessed the deep faith and genuine love for Christ that characterizes both Blessed Savior and St. Margaret Mary parishes. Your devotion to your respective communities is evident, and it is a blessing to serve alongside you.

I want to address directly what I know is on many of your hearts and minds: the future relationship between our two parish communities. I have heard your concerns, and I want to assure you that any decisions regarding our parishes will be made through a process rooted in prayer, careful discernment, and genuine respect for both communities.

A Journey, Not a Destination

Today, I am announcing that Blessed Savior and St. Margaret Mary parishes will begin a collaborative relationship. This is not a merger – it is the first step in a thoughtful journey that will unfold over time, guided by the Holy Spirit and informed by your voices and needs.

Collaboration means we will work together while maintaining our distinct parish identities. We will explore opportunities to share resources, coordinate ministries, and support one another in our mission to spread the Gospel. This process allows us to discover how God is calling us to serve Him and our broader community more effectively together.

Learning from Our Neighbors

Our neighboring parishes of St. Bernadette, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and Our Lady of Good Hope have walked this path of collaboration for four years. Through their patient and prayerful journey, they have discerned that they are now ready to take the step toward merger. Their experience demonstrates that collaboration is not simply a waiting period before an inevitable merger – it is a meaningful process of discernment where communities genuinely explore how God is calling them forward.

Their journey has been unique to their circumstances, their needs, and their calling. Our journey will be unique to ours.

Your Voice Matters

I want to be absolutely clear: no decisions about the future structure of our parishes will be made without extensive consultation with you, our parishioners. This collaborative process will include opportunities for input through parish councils, town halls, surveys, and informal conversations. Your concerns, your hopes, and your insights will shape the path forward.

Most importantly, this entire process will be bathed in prayer. We will seek the Lord's guidance at every step, trusting that He will show us how to best serve His people and advance His kingdom in our community.

Moving Forward Together

In the coming weeks, I will be meeting with both parish councils to establish a joint committee that will help guide this collaborative process. We will also schedule informational meetings where you can ask questions, share concerns, and learn more about what collaboration will mean in practical terms.

I invite you to approach this journey with open hearts and minds. Change can be challenging, but when we place our trust in the Lord and in one another, change can also be a source of growth, renewal, and deeper faith.

Please know that my commitment to you is unwavering: I will shepherd both communities with the same care and attention, honoring the unique gifts and traditions that make each parish special while exploring how we might serve Christ more fully together.

Let us pray for one another, for wisdom in this process, and for the grace to follow wherever the Lord leads us. May our collaboration be a witness to the unity Christ desires for all His people.

In Christ,

Fr Mark Payne

Pastor, Blessed Savior and St. Margaret Mary Parishes

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." - Matthew 18:20