



Diocese of Youngstown

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

October 9, 2026

Dear Faithful of Saint Ambrose Parish, Saint Joan of Arc Parish, St. Joseph Parish and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish,

I write today with a heart full of hope as we enter a new chapter in the lives of our local Church. After much consultation with your Pastoral Leaders, Pastoral Councils and the Finance Councils, that included a synodal process, I am announcing that Saint Ambrose Parish and Saint Joseph Parish will merge into a single unit and that Saint Joan of Arc Parish and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish will merge into a single unit on January 1, 2027.

I am also pleased to announce the appointment of Father Scott Kopp as administrator of Saint Ambrose and Saint Joseph Parishes effective November 1, 2026, until January 1, 2027, when he will become the pastor of the newly merged parish of Saint Ambrose and Saint Joseph. As for the soon to be merged parish of Saint Joan of Arc and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishes, I am equally pleased to announce that Father Frantisek Katrinak will serve as the pastor of that newly merged parish effective January 1, 2027.

Change naturally brings questions and emotions. You have built deep roots in your spiritual homes. Let me be clear that no church building is closing. Your beloved sacred spaces, stained glass and altars will continue to serve as beacons of faith in your neighborhoods.

This decision is not about ending a legacy, but about strengthening our mission. By combining our resources, leadership and gifts, we can do more together than parishes can do apart.

You are not losing your identity; you are expanding your family. The vibrant spirit of each of your parishes, your unique gifts, your rich history and your deep love for the Eucharist, is not being lost. But uniting our resources, our gifts and our hearts, we are being called to build an even stronger witness to the Gospel in Portage County. Over the coming weeks, more details will be shared on how councils and ministries will begin working together.

I ask you to open your heart to this moment of grace. Pray for one another and pray for the vibrant future we are building side by side. Together let us pray "That All May Be One."

Sincerely in Christ

Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown

DJB/rs

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