



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DECREE OF AMALGAMATION OF
THE PARISH OF SAINT HYACINTH (GLEN COVE)
and
THE PARISH OF SAINT ROCCO (GLEN COVE)
to
THE PARISH OF SAINT PATRICK (GLEN COVE)

THE FACTS

In 1910 and 1937, the Parishes of Saint Hyacinth and Saint Rocco were established as national parishes within the territorial boundaries of the Parish of Saint Patrick. Saint Hyacinth was established as a Polish national parish and Saint Rocco was established as an Italian national parish.

In 2011, the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine were entrusted with the pastoral care of Saint Patrick and Saint Rocco, and in 2020 the Canons assumed the pastoral care of Saint Hyacinth. In the recent years, a great deal of progress has been made in fostering cooperation and bringing together the common stewardship of the three parishes, such as combining religious education and faith formation into a single program that serves all three parishes. Still, facing demographic shifts, significant changes in the cultural populations, and financial challenges, and after many years of discussion and careful analysis of the sacramental and pastoral needs of the people, it has been proposed that the national Parishes of Saint Hyacinth and Saint Rocco be amalgamated (united) to the territorial Parish of Saint Patrick, thus formulating one territorial parish – the Parish of Saint Patrick. According to Father Gabriel Rach, the current pastor of all three parishes, this proposed amalgamation will establish a “much stronger parish” and will enable the parishes to better “meet current and future pastoral challenges and needs.”

Father Rach has identified three specific reasons to substantiate the just cause that is required by law:

1. **Insufficient Members Attending the Polish and Italian Masses:** The attendance at the Polish and Italian Masses at Saint Hyacinth and Saint Rocco respectively are smaller than the English Masses offered. This demonstrates that both parishes are currently not functioning primarily as the national parishes they were established as. Certainly, if Saint Rocco and

Saint Hyacinth were to be restricted to their original mission and only offer Italian and Polish Masses, their populations would be radically insufficient to support a parish.

- **The Parish of Saint Hyacinth** offers three Sunday (and Saturday anticipatory) Masses. On average, approximately 276 people attend those three Masses (approximately 111 attend the Polish Mass with approximately 165 attending the other two Masses).
- **The Parish of Saint Rocco** offers five Sunday (and Saturday anticipatory) Masses. On average, approximately 620 people attend those five Masses. The Italian Mass average is 70 and is declining. That leaves approximately 550 people attending the other four Masses.
- **The Parish of Saint Patrick** offers five Sunday Masses (and Saturday anticipatory), with an average attendance of 1320 people. Of the 1320 people who attend, nearly 55% (722) attend the Spanish Mass exclusively, with less than 600 people attending the other four Masses.

With these statistics and demographics in mind, it is evident that to turn the Parishes of Saint Hyacinth and Saint Rocco into territorial parishes would not be a beneficial solution, for it is clear that the Glen Cove community is not in need of three territorial parishes. Indeed, those attending Mass in English come from the same local population of Catholics. Since all three parishes offer English Masses, the combined number of these Masses exceeds the need. Saint Patrick, however, with the primarily primary responsibility to offer Mass in English as the territorial parish, does not have the capacity by itself to provide all the English Masses needed for the community, due in part to the large Spanish Mass and associated activities there. A truly shared schedule, made possible through uniting the parishes, would enable the creation of a right-sized Mass schedule for Catholics in the area.

2. Financial Viability: Amalgamating these three parishes would greatly improve the financial stability of all three parishes.

- **The Parish of Saint Hyacinth** does not support itself with parishioner contributions or other sources or ordinary income. Since 2017, the Parish has run an operating deficit every year except for 2021. If not for a recent, large bequest, the parish's financial status would be in true crisis. It simply cannot meet its financial obligations with parishioner contributions, which is the benchmark of a healthy parish.
- **The Parish of Saint Rocco** is somewhat healthy financially, due in large part to the continued success of the Feast of Saint Rocco. Without the Feast, the parish would barely break even each year. It must be noted, however, that the Feast has been declining steadily in profitability due to increased costs, a diminishing number of volunteers, and an increase in paid help.
- **The Parish of Saint Patrick** is surviving financially but mostly breaks even at the end of each fiscal year. The Parish relies heavily on large donors and bequests, but with the passing of each generation, those large donations are diminishing. In addition, the Parish

of Saint Patrick has nearly \$4 million in critical, delayed maintenance projects, with no current or expected means to fund them.

Saint Patrick and Saint Hyacinth also have a substantial amount of debt owed to the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Fortunately, a bequest in excess of \$11 million has been recently given to Saint Hyacinth. Merging the resources of all three parishes will enable the newly amalgamated parish to undergo urgent maintenance projects, repay the debt, and establish a \$10 - \$12 million perpetual fund, which – drawing a conservative 5% in interest – will provide the united parish with more than \$500,000 in dependable income each year. This dependable income will ensure that the newly amalgamated parish will meet all its financial obligations each year while providing for the financial security for the merged parish into the future.

3. A More Efficient Means to Meet the Sacramental and Pastoral Needs of the Parishes: Statistical data shows that the sacramental and pastoral needs of the three parishes have significantly changed in recent years:

- **The Parish of Saint Hyacinth** celebrates less than 10 baptisms and less than 10 weddings each year. Funerals have also decreased significantly in recent years.
- In the **Parish of Saint Rocco**, the vast majority of baptisms and weddings come from families who either are not associated with the parish in particular or are inactive members of the parish.
- The Spanish-speaking community in the **Parish of Saint Patrick** celebrates many sacraments each year. Outside that community, however, the parish has seen a noticeable decrease in funerals over the years, and a radical decrease in weddings. A great majority of weddings outside the Spanish-speaking population are either non-parishioners or couples who do not attend weekly Mass.

With the exception of the Hispanic community, the visible trend is of a baptized Catholic community that increasingly does not seek sacraments, weddings, or funerals. Participation in religious education is also decreasing each year, even during the sacramental years.

THE LAW

A parish is a community of the faithful which, being a juridic person *ipso iure*, is perpetual by its nature (cf. c. 120 §1, and c. 515, §§1,3). It cannot be extinguished or even notably altered without just cause. The authority competent to alter parishes is the diocesan Bishop (cf. c. 381 §2, c. 368, c. 515 §2). He is competent to judge the existence of the required just cause, but his judgment must conform to ecclesiastical jurisprudence.

According to this jurisprudence, the principal motivation for modifying a parish is concern for souls (cf. *Christus Dominus*, n. 32) and this modification should be undertaken when the good of the faithful requires it. Furthermore, while jurisprudence acknowledges that the diocesan Bishop

can and sometimes should consider the good of the whole diocese in making his decisions, the particular reasons for modifying a particular parish must be relevant to that individual parish – the cause must *ad rem*. Generalized or diocesan motivations alone cannot justify the modification of a specific parish.

Before rendering his decision, the Bishop must obtain the necessary information and, insofar as possible, hear those whose rights could be injured (cf. c. 50). Before consulting with the members of the Presbyteral Council, which is required for validity (cf. c. 515 §2), he must first provide them with all relevant information, lawfully convoke the Council, and personally consult the members regarding each individual parish modification that has been proposed (cf. c. 127 and c. 166).

The decree modifying a parish must be issued in writing at the time the decision is given and then lawfully communicated without delay. The period of time during which hierarchical recourse may be presented begins with the lawful notification of the decree (cf. c. 1734 §2). In addition, the decree must mention in summary form the just causes for the decision (cf. c. 51).

DECREE

Having considered the facts of this proposal and having evaluated those facts according to the norms of law;

Having heard from the Presbyteral Council on February 12, 2026, whereby the members unanimously supported this proposed amalgamation;

Having considered the concerns of those whose rights may be harmed;

Having received the consent of the Pastor, the Associate Pastors, the Parish Councils, and the Finance Councils in all three parishes;

Having judged that sufficient just causes are present (as noted above) and that the good of souls will not be impaired;

Having confidence that there will be no interruption in the pastoral care of the people, namely:

- All three church buildings will remain open for Mass, sacraments, public worship, and private prayer.
- One Mass each weekend will continue to be celebrated in Polish and in Italian; English and Spanish Masses will continue in the normal fashion.
- Funerals, weddings, and baptisms will be available in all three churches.
- The yearly Feast at Saint Rocco will continue.
- Religious education and faith formation will continue uninterrupted.
- Ministries will continue in the same fashion as they do now.

I hereby DECREE an extinctive union by which the Parish of Saint Hyacinth (Glen Head) and the Parish of Saint Rocco (Glen Cove) are to be canonically amalgamated (united) to the Parish of Saint Patrick (Glen Cove).

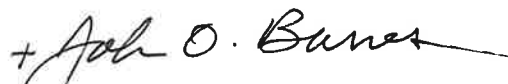
The intention and the will of the donors, as well as any acquired rights have been considered, especially regarding the allocation of goods and the obligations of debts. The temporal goods of the Parish of Saint Hyacinth and the Parish of Saint Rocco, including property and treasury, as well as debt, shall be assigned to the Parish of Saint Patrick upon completion of the civil legal procedures required by New York State law. In addition, the sacramental records of Saint Hyacinth and Saint Rocco shall be preserved at the Parish of Saint Patrick.

Since the Parish of Saint Hyacinth and the Parish of Saint Rocco are national parishes and are not defined by geographical boundaries, the territorial boundaries of the Parish of Saint Patrick will remain unchanged by this action.

The name of this newly amalgamated parish shall be the Parish of Saint Patrick; however, the name of each church edifice (worship) site will remain the same. The three worship sites within the territory of the Parish of Saint Patrick – the Church of Saint Patrick, the Church of Saint Hyacinth, and the Church of Saint Rocco – shall continue to serve as sacred places of worship as needed.

This decree is to be made public to all members of the faithful in an appropriate manner on Sunday, April 26, 2026, and shall go into effect at 12:01 AM on Friday, May 8, 2026. Recourse may be made within the peremptory time limit of ten (10) days from the legitimate notification of this decree in accordance with the norms of law (cf. c. 1734).

Given in Rockville Centre
on this 24th day of April, 2026



Most Reverend John O. Barres, STD, JCL, DD
Bishop of Rockville Centre



Reverend Lee R. Descoteaux, JCL
Vice Chancellor

