



The Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
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February 4, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Fifteen months ago, pastoral leaders and lay representatives from the 31 parishes in the Bloomington, Connersville and Seymour deaneries entered an important planning process called *Connected in the Spirit*. This process is an effort to discern where God is leading the Church in central and southern Indiana and to discuss how the Archdiocese of Indianapolis should change its structures in order to carry out its mission today and in the future. This planning process was inaugurated in 2008 under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Buechlein. Nearly every parish in the Archdiocese has taken part in *Connected in the Spirit* with only the New Albany and Tell City deaneries left to complete the process.

After careful study, personal prayer and a broad consultation that included representatives from the Bloomington, Connersville and Seymour deaneries, the Archdiocesan Planning Commission, the Council of Priests and the Leadership Team of the Archdiocese, I have given my approval to a series of recommendations that originated with the group of deanery representatives. I thank everyone who took part in this planning process and I am grateful for the feedback that so many people gave me as I studied these recommendations.

Every parish will be affected by these decisions. I believe that this plan represents a better stewardship of our resources and will strengthen our ability to carry out the mission that Christ has entrusted to us.

Most parishes will be asked to share resources or to form a partnership with another parish by creating joint ministries and programs. In addition to combining resources, linked parishes will share a pastor or parish life coordinator.

Some parishes will close as a result of mergers. St. Rose of Lima Parish in Knightstown will merge into St. Anne Parish in New Castle. Our Lady of Providence Parish in Brownstown will merge into St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour. The three parishes in Richmond – Holy Family, St. Mary and St. Andrew – will be extinguished and a new parish with a new name will be established. The new parish will be served by one pastor, but will maintain the three former parish churches as worship sites.

St. Rose of Lima Parish in Knightstown will merge into St. Anne Parish in New Castle on July 1, 2016, utilizing two worship sites, if necessary.

The newly merged St. Anne Parish will be linked with St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City. This relationship should intensify, to the mutual benefit of both parishes, and be guided by the further suggestions offered by the Archdiocesan Planning Commission. The parishes will establish a joint pastoral council to coordinate planning, outreach and evaluation. Each parish will retain its own finance council.

The newly merged St. Anne Parish, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish and St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Rushville will form a partnership enhancing their ministry while avoiding unnecessary duplication of services and favoring a conservation of financial and personnel resources.

Please note that this letter is not a decree with canonical effects. The proper decrees will be available for inspection and copying at the respective parish offices.

The coming months will bring changes that touch all the faithful of the Bloomington, Connerville and Seymour deaneries, as well as a particular grief for the members of the parishes that will close. I truly regret the pain these decisions will cause. While I personally know the anguish that comes when having your home parish closed, I am also certain that the God is constantly working through us to advance the work of His Church, leading us through sorrow to new and more abundant life.

I pray for you each day and ask that you please pray for me. May the Holy Spirit continue to fill our hearts with love and give us the wisdom and courage live out our baptismal call as disciples of our risen Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R." with a small cross symbol to the left of the name.

Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Indianapolis