

# Definitions of Merged, Linked and Partnership Parishes

## Parishes Merging into other Parishes

When a parish merges into another parish: these parishes are what the Congregation for the Clergy refers to as extinctive union between parishes. In this model, one parish is merged into another parish, with the parishioners from the “merging into” parish becoming part of another existing/receiving parish.

There is a second model for merging parishes or extinctive union between parishes. In this second type of merger or extinctive union, two or more parishes are extinguished and are merged into a newly formed parish. This model was used for Holy Family, St. Andrew and St. Mary parishes in Richmond.

Parishes that are merging (becoming one parish) have as their focus for the first year the specifics of merging, and when possible to begin addressing partnering with other parishes in their cohort where applicable.

For specific information on the reasons for these mergers, please refer to the Decrees for each parish.

## Linking Parishes

Linked parishes are parishes that share a common pastor or parish life coordinator. Such parishes will normally share programs and pastoral administration in the same way as partner parishes.

Parishes that are linking have as their focus for the first year the specifics of linking, and when possible to begin addressing partnering with other parishes in their cohort where applicable.

## Partnership Parishes

Partner parishes are parishes which have not been juridically altered, merged, or linked by a common pastor or parish life coordinator but which are committed to work together where possible to offer common pastoral care and administration. Thus, for example, partner parishes may eliminate duplication of programs by offering a program at one of the partner parishes for members of all of the parish partnership.

Parishes enter into partnerships with other parishes when:

- They create joint programs.
- When appropriate, they share staff to enhance the quality of ministry and practice good stewardship of resources.
- They share in-service or retreats for parish pastoral councils, finance councils, or parish committees.

Each Partnership Parishes Cohort is asked to, among other common areas:

- Plan, implement, build upon and enhance vocations awareness programs
- Recognize the gifts of people from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds and reach out to meet their needs
- Design and implement effective lifelong faith formation programs
- Strengthen training for liturgical and lay ministries
- Develop a coordinated Mass schedule with consolidations/reductions in poorly attended Masses
- Promote and support Catholic Schools
- Develop engaging evangelization programs

## Connected in the Spirit Q&A for Pastoral Leaders

### Q1. What is *Connected in the Spirit*?

A. Sixteen months ago, pastoral leaders and lay representatives from the parishes in the Bloomington, Connersville and Seymour deaneries began 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 must change its structures in order to carry out its mission today and in the future. This planning process was inaugurated under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Buechlein in 2008. The Terre Haute Deanery parishes were the first to have participated in the planning process. Last year, the parishes of the Indianapolis deaneries completed the process. The New Albany and Tell City deaneries have begun the *Connected in the Spirit* process. They are the final two deaneries of the 11 deaneries in the Archdiocese to take part in *Connected in the Spirit*.

### Q2. What are the goals of *Connected in the Spirit*?

1. To enhance the vibrancy of parish life in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
2. To foster an appreciation for and participation in Sunday Eucharist and the sacraments
3. To promote good stewardship so that parishes are financially viable now and into the future.
4. To maximize the availability of quality Catholic School education throughout the Archdiocese.
5. To ensure that all parishioners have opportunities for quality lifelong Christian Formation, including supporting new initiatives for youth and young adults and promoting vocations to ordained and lay ministry.
6. To strengthen service to those who are marginalized.
7. To build a greater sense of unity among the many cultures in the Archdiocese.
8. To realign parishes considering the number of priests available to serve, financial resources and demographics.
9. To increase collaboration among all entities in the local, national and universal Church.
10. To advocate for peace and justice in the Church and in the world.

### Q3. Who made the final decisions to merge parishes and to have other parishes become linked or form partnerships?

A. The final decisions were made by Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin after careful study, personal prayer and broad consultation that included pastoral and lay representatives from the Bloomington, Connersville and Seymour deaneries; the Archdiocesan Planning Commission; the Council of Priests and the Leadership Team of the Archdiocese. The initial recommendations were made by representatives of the parishes in the deaneries and the Archdiocesan Planning Commission after several months of work and study.

**Q6. Some parishes are being merged. What parishes are closing as a result of the mergers?**

A. 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. Holy Family, St. Mary and St. Andrew parishes in Richmond will merge to create a new parish with a new name. The mergers are effective July 1, 2016.

**Q7. Are there further closings anticipated in the future?**

A. Archbishop Tobin is confident that the current and near-term issues in the Bloomington, Connersville and Seymour deaneries have been addressed. This plan does not call for any additional closings in these deaneries at this time.

**Q8. Will there be a reduction in parish staffing?**

A. One of the primary goals of *Connected in the Spirit* is to address the use and availability of resources across the deanery. With fewer parishes and greater collaboration among the remaining parishes, it is anticipated that fewer staff will be required. Those decisions will remain at the deanery and parish level during the implementation.

**Q9. Will there be changes to the Mass schedule?**

A: It is recommended that all the parishes of the deaneries evaluate their Mass schedules to better meet the needs of parishioners and priests. These decisions will be made at the deanery and parish levels.

**Q10. What will happen to the property and assets of the closed parishes?**

A: All assets and liabilities of the closed parish are transferred to the parish into which the closed parish is merged. The assets and liabilities become assets and liabilities of the receiving parish. This includes physical property such as church buildings, other parish buildings and parish cemeteries. All sacramental records of the closed parish will be maintained at the receiving parish.

**Q11. How will parishioners be involved and who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?**

A: The Archdiocese has set in place a team that will assist the parishes in carrying out these decisions. Sr. Connie Kramer, S.P. has agreed to serve as Pastoral Facilitator with special responsibility for the care of the parishioners whose parish is being merged into another. Dan Krodel, who participated in *Connected in the Spirit* as a Cohort Team Leader in Indianapolis, will help coordinate the implementation of these decisions. The implementation team may also call on the assistance from the consultants of the Reid Group. More information about the implementation of the decisions as well as how parishioners can volunteer to help with the next steps of the process will be communicated in the near future.