



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

May 10, 2021

Dear Parishioners of Saint John Neumann Parish,

As you may recall, well before any of us knew about the approaching pandemic, the Diocese of Scranton had begun a long-range planning process with parish leaders. The Vision 2020 approach involves each of the twelve deaneries developing a "blueprint" for the coming ten years, taking into account the changes happening and our best possible responses.

Even before the multiple impacts of Covid-19 on our people and our parishes, we have been experiencing significant changes in regard to such things as: clergy personnel, financial sustainability of parishes, facility challenges, and changing demographics in this part of the country. While these realities require some challenging planning decisions, they also offer opportunity if we begin to take strategic action now.

With this in mind, and after consultation with your Pastors and Parish Pastoral Council members, I have directed that the parishes of Saint John Neumann and Saint Paul of the Cross be brought together in a linkage, with a single Pastor. The intent is to provide a transition period enabling the Pastor and pastoral team to consolidate resources and plan together for the possibility of integrating into a single parish serving the faithful of Southside Scranton.

There are many questions to be examined, and choices still to be made in this period of transition. Your Pastoral and Finance Council members have expressed a strong commitment to visiting with you in person in order to discuss this new direction for your parish. This valuable opportunity would have already been arranged with you, except for the unpredictable duration of the pandemic and necessary safety precautions. Hopefully some type of community dialogue will be feasible soon.

A project team with members from both parishes, along with Diocesan staff, will be engaged to accompany and guide the process. Professionals in engineering, financial planning, and pastoral formation will contribute to the development of this newly consolidated parish.

Of course the engagement of all of you, the parishioners, will be the most essential factor in sustaining and continuing to grow a lively faith community in the service of the mission of Jesus Christ. Be assured of my deep gratitude for all that you and your families have shared in furthering this mission over the decades past - and my participation with you in prayer and action towards a future filled with hope.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton