

Most Reverend Paul David Sirba, D.D.



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See

Bishop of Duluth

DECREE

The parishes of St. Lawrence Church, Duluth and St. Joseph Church, Duluth have been clustered for a number of years. For some time, there has been discussion of the merger of the parishes. Over the course of a year, representatives of each parish together with their pastor have more seriously considered the idea of merger as part of the *Diocese of Duluth Diocesan Strategic Five Year Plan* presented by the Most Reverend Paul D. Sirba on January 19, 2012. A number of meetings, both on the deanery and parish levels were held and broad consultation was sought.

According to the Plan, Duluth Deanery, "Cluster 8 states, St. Joseph (Heights) merges into St. Lawrence and St. Joseph closes. St. Lawrence is clustered with Holy Family."

On February 20, 2019 a letter was sent by the pastor of the parishes, Reverend Ryan Moravitz, to the Most Reverend Paul D. Sirba requesting a merger of St. Joseph Church, Duluth into St. Lawrence Church, Duluth. In the letter, the pastor details a number of specific reasons that support the idea of merger for each parish. He states that the reason for this request is for the well-being and health of the pastor serving in this cluster. The administration of three separate parishes with a total of 1100 families limits the effectiveness of pastoral ministry, as well as creates an unhealthy and unbalanced atmosphere for a healthy priestly life of ministry.

The Presbyteral Council met on November 8, 2018. The Council members were given information concerning the proposed merger of St. Joseph Church, Duluth into St. Lawrence Church, Duluth. They were also informed of the levels of consultation that had taken place. After serious and thoughtful discussion, the members of the Presbyteral Council recommended that the parish of St. Joseph Church, Duluth be merged into St. Lawrence Church, Duluth to form one parish.

Therefore, having received the recommendation of the pastor, given the history and status of St. Joseph Church, Duluth and having consulted with the members of the Presbyteral Council on November 8, 2018 and acting upon their recommendation, in accord with canons 121 and 515§2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby decree that effective on April 22, 2019, St. Joseph Church, Duluth will merge into St. Lawrence Church, Duluth to form St. Lawrence/St. Joseph, Duluth Minnesota.

All parishioners of St. Joseph Church, Duluth are entitled to become parishioners of St. Lawrence Church according to the universal law of the Church and legitimate custom within the Diocese of Duluth.

St. Lawrence Church will continue to use the St. Lawrence Church building for Divine Worship.

In accord with canon 121 of the *Code of Canon Law*, all the temporal goods and assets, as well as all the debts and liabilities of St. Joseph Church, Duluth will be transferred to St. Lawrence Church. The intentions of the benefactors are to be safeguarded.

All sacramental registers from St. Joseph Church, Duluth are to be transferred to St. Lawrence Church, Duluth where they will be faithfully preserved according to canon 535.

The territorial boundaries of St. Lawrence/St. Joseph, Duluth, Minnesota will encompass the area of the former boundaries of St. Lawrence Church, Duluth and St. Joseph Church, Duluth.

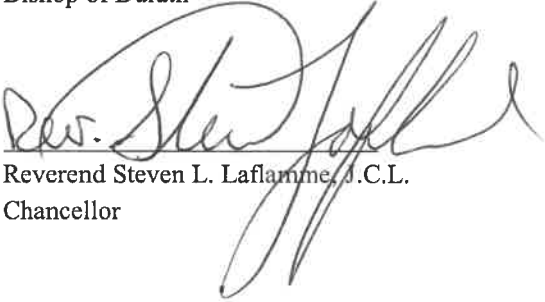
In accord with canons 1732-1739, any parishioner of St. Joseph Church, Duluth or St. Lawrence Church, Duluth has the right of recourse against this decree within the peremptory time period of ten (10) available days (business days) from the notice of this decree. To exercise this right, the parishioner must write to the Bishop explaining exactly what change is being sought to the Bishop's decree. Clearly explaining the reasons for the requested change is very important so that the Bishop can make a well-informed decision that is sensitive to all the parishioners' needs. If the Bishop's response to this request is unsatisfactory, the parishioner then has the right of recourse to the Holy See. Further information can be obtained from the Pastoral Center in Duluth regarding this level of recourse.

It is my prayer that the pastor and parishioners of St. Lawrence/St. Joseph, Duluth, Minnesota grow together in faith, living in hope and united in love. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be poured out upon them in abundance and may all they do give glory to God.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Duluth.



Most Reverend Paul D. Sirba, D.D.
Bishop of Duluth



Reverend Steven L. Laflamme, J.C.L.
Chancellor

