



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
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OFFICE OF
THE ARCHBISHOP

August 2023

To the Catholic Faithful of Waterbury,

In an article in the **Republican American** a year ago entitled *“Archdiocese: Fewer priests, less faithful, will lead to closings”* Tracy O’Shaughnessy quoted the following words from a letter I had written all the Catholic people of Waterbury: “The present number of church buildings cannot be sustained.” She added, “Waterbury will see fewer Masses as more priests retire and fewer men are ordained to replace them.”

What both she and I forecast has now become a reality.

While none of us like change, it has become inevitable. And while we are all entitled to our own opinions, we are not entitled to our own facts, but must face reality. Not only are there fewer and fewer priests, but there has also been a sharp decrease in attendance at some of the parishes in Waterbury, all of which necessitates implementing a “municipal model” of Pastoral Planning.

In order to ensure stability over the next few years the following plan has been discussed by the clergy and is now in the process of being shared with the parishioners of Waterbury by their pastors.

This past April, St. Francis Xavier Church was merged with All Saints-Todos los Santos Parish (St. Anne and Our Lady of Lourdes Churches), with Father Diego Jiménez as Pastor. Now I want to share with you additional changes, effective September 30, 2023:

1. Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Loreto will merge with the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (Father James Sullivan, Pastor):
 - The entirety of the Blessed Sacrament campus will be used for Catholic education (The Catholic Academy of Waterbury);
 - Blessed Sacrament Church will be used for weddings and funerals only, with no regularly scheduled Masses;
 - St. Michael Parish will also merge with the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.
2. St. Joseph Parish will merge with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish now that Father Fred Aniello is retiring, and Monsignor Vittorio Guerrera will become Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish and St. Joseph Parish:
 - St. Joseph Church will no longer have regularly scheduled Masses. Future use/sale of the building will be discussed.

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3. SS. Peter and Paul Church will no longer have regularly scheduled Masses. Future use/sale of the buildings will be discussed. Mary, Mother of the Church Parish is pastored by Monsignor Thomas Ginty (Monsignor is also Pastor of St. Basil the Great in Wolcott).
4. St. Patrick's remains under the pastoral direction of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest.
5. Our Lady of Fatima continues to serve the Portuguese and Brazilian community.

These changes have all been anticipated, and the time for implementation has come. Hopefully stronger communities will result.

Waterbury was for a very long time "fruitful ground" for vocations to the priesthood. That, sadly, is no longer the case. So please join me not only in praying and encouraging priestly vocations, but also for a renewal of Catholic Faith and practice among all our people in the Archdiocese and our country.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation, and may God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford