**AGENDA**

Town Hall Merger Meeting – St. John the Baptist, Boston

January 21, 2025

1.) Prayer – Fr. Jim

2.) Introductory Comments – Fr. Jim

- Why this meeting? **To talk about the key things affecting us (things aren’t as bad as they seem…)**

- Meeting Format – **key points of merger**

**- practical implications**

**- questions**

3.) Key Points of the Decree:

- Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher, Bishop of Buffalo… has decreed that: “St. John the Baptist Parish, Boston be merged into SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Hamburg and St. John the Baptist to be extinct thereby.”

- “SS. Peter and Paul Parish will be the recipient of the net assets and liabilities of St. John the Baptist Parish.”

- “The intentions of the founders and donors regarding the temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to the extinct St. John the Baptist Parish, insofar as they exist, must be respected.”

- “All the parish and sacramental records of the extinct St. John the Baptist Parish are to be properly preserved and safeguarded in the parish archives of SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Hamburg, in accord with the norm of law.”

- “This decree is to be effective on Monday 3 March 2025.”

4.) Implications of the Decree:

- The civil corporation of St. John the Baptist Parish including its lay trustees and bank accounts, is to be maintained, as is.

- All accounts are to be reconciled and bills paid prior to merger.

- Following the merger:

- Current employees of St. John’s/St. Mary’s need to be placed on either SS. Peter & Paul Payroll, or the Family Payroll. Job descriptions and responsibilities will need to be revised.

- Checking accounts, savings accounts, mass accounts, investment accounts are no longer used and the money in them frozen.

- Mass intentions and accounting to be done by SS. Peter & Paul parish. (Checks for Masses from March 3 forward need to be made payable to: **SS. Peter & Paul Church.)**

- All income from offertory is now the responsibility of SS. Peter & Paul Parish. (Checks for Offertory donations need to be made payable to **SS. Peter & Paul Church**).

- All bills are the responsibility of SS. Peter & Paul Parish

- Weekday and Weekend Masses would remain as they are now

- Records of Sacraments (Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, Marriages) would be recorded in the books of SS. Peter & Paul Parish.

- Funerals would be recorded in the Register at SS. Peter & Paul Parish

- Initial Intention is to maintain some minimal Office Hours at St. John’s to help schedule Mass intentions and coordinate other needs.

- Faith Formation will continue as is until completion of the current program in May. The plan is to centralize Faith Formation at St. Bernadette’s in the Fall. (The details are still being worked out.)

- A Bulletin would likely continue at St. John’s, with the designation of St. John’s and St. Mary’s as secondary worship sites of SS. Peter & Paul, until the launching of the Family Bulletin (tentative date June 1).

- The School Building at St. John’s is being proposed for possible sale

5.) Questions/Concerns

6.) Closing Prayer

**Discussion**

Chain of Command:

Bishop Michael Fisher

Vicar General – Fr. Peter Karalus

Pastor of Family

Lay Trustees

Funerals / Baptisms

* call St. John’s first – as is done now
* certificate and records will say St. Peter & Paul after March 3, 2025

- We may schedule Mass intentions through the rest of the year.

- Starting March 4th, the $ for these Mass intentions must go to St. Peter & Paul’s

**- ALL CHECKS MUST BE PAYABLE ST. PETER & PAUL as of March 4th**

- Weekday / Weekend Masses will remain as is now

- Must have a priest to celebrate them and people to come to them

If either one changes, Masses may change

- Fr. Paul Mukasa goes back to Uganda in May. We have been told that he will be replaced.

- St. Mary’s “Oratory” will be upgraded to a secondary worship site

Answers we don’t have yet:

- cemetery care is being discussed

Questions / comments:

* If we want to have a function, do we have to ask permission from St. P & P?
  + As long as we have the parish center, we are free to gather as we choose
  + If it is a fundraiser type activity, we need to discuss with Pastor / St. P & P
* St. Bernadette’s is challenging their merger, which means their status is on hold until they get an answer from the Vatican.
* Rotation of clergy – all 4 priests are assigned to the family – not a specific church
* Collection envelopes in the future will have a number in front of your current envelope number, which distinguishes you as “St. John’s” and your $$ will be “marked” as St. John’s – this will be used to pay St. John’s bills, etc…
* We currently have no debt at St. John’s / St. Mary’s
* **Our future is dependent on continuing to give and continuing to attend Mass**
* There has not been a financial report in a few years?
  + As different people have been working on our books, the Diocese wanted certain categories for certain things, so we had to spend much time going over the last 2 years so that items were in order
  + We will be able to present a financial report soon
* Registration – we will not be automatically registered with St. Peter & Paul
  + You will have to decide if and where you want to register
  + We are working out what will be the easiest way to register / update our records – more info to come as decisions are made
* Choir – each church in our family should be able to continue their choir as is
* Altar & Rosary – does ours have an opinion? Want to join in?
* Why did they merge everyone into St. Peter & Paul and not some to Nativity?
  + No idea…
* One parishioner stated that he is very disappointed in the Catholic Church
  + Keep in mind that our goal is “Eternal salvation of our soul”
  + We are followers of Jesus Christ – be faithful to Him
  + Go where you are spiritually nourished
* Disappointed in transparency of Bishop
  + Need a lot of cash for sex abuse scandal and has a lot of pressure to reorganize
* Is renting the rectory an option
  + Not really with the office there and connection to church
  + A future priest might live there
  + We can use it for meetings and such
* Why the push to do everything faster?
  + Reshaping and reorganizing has been in the process for many months and even years in some cases.
  + It has actually been taking much longer than expected.
  + There is a lot of pressure in the Diocese to reorganize, sell possible property, and pay off debt.
  + The shortage of priests will become a bitter reality in the coming years.