

## **Update Regarding the Merger of The Church of the Resurrection and Most Holy Trinity Parish**

November 3, 2024

The coming together of The Church of the Resurrection and Most Holy Trinity Parish brings with it many, many questions. Using this “frequently asked questions” format, Father Mendoza, the priests, and a transition team of parishioners from The Church of the Resurrection and Most Holy Trinity Parish, hope to provide an update and clear information during this time of transition. Please *take a few minutes to read these questions and answers.*

### **Why is this merger happening?**

The primary shifts that have fueled blending parishes across the northern tier of the US have been going on for a number of years. These include a decline in the number of regularly worshipping Catholics, a movement of population away from this portion of the country, and a decline in the number of priests to serve the parishes we currently have. In response to those trends, Most Holy Trinity and Our Lady of Fatima Churches were merged in 2021 with the understanding that upon Monsignor Georgia’s retirement, The Church of the Resurrection would join, and a single new parish would be formed. *The ultimate goal of coming together is to create a parish in Wallingford that is sustainable for the future in terms of pastoral care and resources.*

### **What is meant by a *single* or “merged” parish?**

**In every way, we will be one family of faith.** That means that our ministries, our administration and staff and our mission will be coordinated as one. It is important to remember that a merger calls us to work as *a new unified parish*. That is quite different from essentially remaining separate communities but sharing the same priests.

### **When is the merger slated to take place?**

After this period of transition which began September 1, 2024, the merger is anticipated to take place in mid-summer 2025.

### **Will our Mass schedule change?**

Yes, unfortunately, our Mass schedules will need to change at all three churches for a number of reasons. Our priests are bound by Vatican guidelines that specify the number of Masses they can celebrate on any given day, and eventually, our new parish will be served by only two priests. Also, the conversations that both priests and parishioners enjoy and look forward to after Mass would be difficult with the current schedule. How will the decision be made? With any such study, the data will drive the decision. For example, attendance numbers at all Masses, church capacities, as well as the time and distance needed to travel between churches will be reviewed by the priests and Transition Team. At any time, our priests and members of the Transition Team are willing to listen to your concerns and consider possible alternative solutions in the process of making a decision. Thank you in advance for your understanding regarding the changes which must accompany this blending of parishes, remembering that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” Catechism of the Catholic Church 1324-27

### **Will any churches close?**

As is currently the case in all Archdiocese of Hartford parish mergers, The Church of the Resurrection and Most Holy Trinity Parish are in the process of having an engineering corporation conduct a building assessment at each of the three campuses. The information provided by that assessment, along with a review of the new parish’s finances, discussions with parishioners, and the Archdiocese of Hartford, will lead to an understanding of the new parish’s needs regarding buildings. Any potential

church closing would not be undertaken lightly. The fear and pain of these sorts of possible changes is not lost on anyone in parish leadership. At the same time, our faith in Christ nurtures us and sustains us in every circumstance; Christ promised us, "I am with you always."

### **What will happen to the financial resources of our parishes?**

The financial resources and liabilities of the two parishes will be combined upon the official merger date. Funds that are designated as restricted for a particular project will remain so. All other financial resources and donations at the time of the merger will support the mission of the new parish of which all Wallingford Catholics will be members.

**What about Pastoral and Finance Councils?** Until Archbishop Coyne issues a formal decree of merger, there will be separate Pastoral and Finance Councils. When the merger takes place, the new parish will move toward forming one Pastoral Council and one Finance Council providing support and guidance to Father Mendoza and all future pastors.

### **How will this affect youth faith formation?**

The faith formation programs of The Church of the Resurrection and Most Holy Trinity Parish will continue to operate independently for the current formation year. Upon the merger, these programs will come together.

### **Will the parish name change?**

At this time, the possibility of a new parish corporation name being given to the united parish of Wallingford has yet to be decided. However, it is especially important to understand that *the dedication name of each church cannot change*. The Church of Resurrection, Most Holy Trinity Church and Our Lady of Fatima Church will always retain those names. However, the parish uniting the three may have a different name in which all Wallingford Catholics will share.

### **Transition Team Members**

A transition team has been gathered by Father Mendoza from members of both parishes to share their wisdom and expertise with him regarding various elements of this process. The Wallingford Catholic Transition Team includes:

From The Church of the Resurrection: Ellen Benham, Kathy Castelli, Anita DeAngelo, Richard Krombel and Phil Wright.

From Most Holy Trinity Parish: Hank Baum, Jody Criscuolo, Marty Mansfield, and Chris Shortell.

The priests of the parish as well as pastoral associates, Joe Tatta and Gail Bellucci, are *ex officio* (advisory) members of the Wallingford Transition Team.

### **Feedback & Follow-up**

Next weekend, November 9-10, members of the Wallingford Catholic Transition Team will be available at each church to listen to comments, clarify what they can, and be of assistance to parishioners as a follow-up to this set of FAQs. Additionally, an email address has been established which you can use for the same purpose going forward. That email address is:

**[wfdtransitionteam@gmail.com](mailto:wfdtransitionteam@gmail.com)**. Your name must be included in the body of the email so we can respond to you. We will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.

### **Where can I find updates regarding this process?**

As new information becomes available, it will be posted on both the Most Holy Trinity Parish ([www.mhtwallingford.org](http://www.mhtwallingford.org)) and The Church of the Resurrection ([www.resurrectionct.org](http://www.resurrectionct.org)) websites. Written copies of the updates will also be available in each church when published. It is important to note that the process is committed to making exactly the same announcements on the same days at each parish, so the community is united in its understanding.

### **How can I help?**

The most important thing any of us can do is pray for this process. The Transition Team is committed to praying to the Holy Spirit and following His promptings above all. Father Mendoza, the priests of our parish, and the Transition Team hope that you will join in prayer that each one of us may do the Will of the Holy Spirit. We invite you to offer the prayer below as we journey together. Again, if you have questions, concerns, or comments over the next months, please make those known to any of our priests, a Transition Team member, or via email.

#### **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

*For the Union of the Parishes of Wallingford*

Come, O life-giving Spirit, transform us.  
Stir up in us the flame of love which is your gift.

Give us the wisdom to see as you see.

Give us the understanding to hear as you hear.

Give us the courage and strength to walk  
the way of justice and integrity.

Kindle in us wonder and awe  
that we may have grateful spirits.

You, who dwell within us, praying unceasingly,  
fill us with love and devotion.

Holy Wisdom, guide us in the choices  
we must make.

Give us discerning hearts that we may choose  
what is good, in accord with your desire.

Loving God of Mercy, finish in us the work  
You have begun. Amen.

- The Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Province of the United States  
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