



DIOCESE OF GARY

9292 BROADWAY
MERRILLVILLE, IN 46410-7088
219-769-9292

Bishop of Gary

February 28, 2026

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last year I commissioned a steering committee to work with the clergy and key lay leaders from the nine Catholic parishes and two mission churches in the Laporte/Starke County area to assess the current situation and develop a recommendation for the future. It was clear that each parish and mission possesses unique strengths and strongly-committed parishioners and clergy.

While acknowledging some isolated signs of growth, an overall analysis of data revealed a multi-year downward trend in key metrics such as Mass attendance and participation in the sacraments, as well as a decrease in ministry. The group considered and evaluated several parish models, leading to a recommendation to unify some of the Catholic communities in this area. The group recognized that a shared vision is necessary to best support the spiritual needs of our faithful and maximize collective talents and resources. This led to a recommendation which spoke of unifying some of the Catholic communities and reducing the number of parishes and missions.

After prayerful reflection and unanimous support of the deans, I am accepting the key leaders' recommendations with some minor adaptations. Therefore, over the next several years, there will be a transition to a three-parish model with three additional worship sites that will provide for the spiritual, sacramental, cultural and pastoral needs of Catholics in the Laporte/Starke area. The three parishes will be: Holy Family in Laporte with an additional worship site at St. John Kanty; Sacred Heart in Wanatah with an additional worship site at St. Mary, Otis; and St. Thomas Aquinas with an additional worship site at Ss. Cyril and Methodius. I envision complete implementation of this transition to take place over the next few years, occurring in phases. An outline of this process is attached.

I recognize this announcement will affect people differently. Some will experience feelings of loss and anger. Other people may see this model as a new beginning, creating opportunities for growth and vitality for the Catholic presence in this area. One of the criteria that your key leaders emphasized was that signature ministries would be relocated for their continuance, and so your early and intentional engagement will be the key to the success of this process, ensuring that all voices are heard, and the desired results are achieved.

Please know that I am committed to supporting you in this process. We are all seeking the Lord's guidance, wisdom, and strength so that the Catholic Church in the Laporte/Starke County area will always be a vibrant, caring, and disciple-driven community. You can be confident of my abiding prayers for all the members of these parishes during this time of transition.

Asking God's blessings upon you, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary