



# Joseph Charles Bambera

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA  
EPISCOPUS SCRANTONENSIS



## DECREE

In the name of God. Amen.

WHEREAS, utilizing the Diocese of Scranton's *Vision 2030: Creating Parish Communities Rooted in the Life of Jesus Christ* process, a pastoral planning process addressing the long-range needs and challenges of the Diocese of Scranton that aims to look proactively at the realities of our local church in the present moment while striving to meet the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade, with the goal of creating vibrant parish communities rooted in the life of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the territorial Parish of Saint John Neumann in Scranton has as its sole church Nativity of Our Lord Church, 633 Orchard Street in Scranton, and;

WHEREAS, the territorial Parish of Saint Paul of the Cross in Scranton has as its sole church Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church, 1217 Prospect Avenue in Scranton, and;

WHEREAS, both parishes have experienced a significant reduction of the Christian Faithful participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of the parishes due to an aging population and relocation of residents from within the same territories, and;

WHEREAS, the diminishing number of faithful whose donations principally sustain the administration, faith formation, and maintenance of the principal churches of both parishes has resulted in the continued inability to sustain ordinary maintenance, operations, and administration, and;

WHEREAS, Father Jonathan P. Kuhar, Pastor of Saint John Neumann Parish and Saint Paul of the Cross Parish, with the consent of the Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils and in consultation with the effected Parishioners, and with the recommendation of the clergy of the Scranton Deanery, has petitioned the undersigned, in accord with canon 121 of the *Code of Canon Law*, a consolidation of both Parishes will result in a newly-formed Parish, and;

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2023, following a presentation to the Presbyteral Council by Father Kuhar to provide the information necessary to make an informed consultation, in accord with the norm of canon 515

§2, the undersigned consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council on the question of this merger, the same Presbyteral Council voted in unanimous support, and;

WHEREAS, in consideration of the question of this modification of Saint John Neumann and Saint Paul of the Cross Parishes, in accord with canon 51 I find the following motivating just causes:

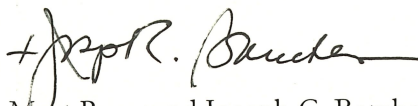
- The demographic changes of the parish communities, which have resulted in a sustained decrease in Mass attendance and sacramental participation
- The inability to sustain operational financial obligations
- The availability of fewer priests within the Diocese of Scranton to attend to the current number of parishes
- The concurrence of the regional Episcopal Vicar, the Vicar Forane, the Presbyteral Council, the Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils in favor of the extinctive unions of Saint John Neumann Parish and Saint Paul of the Cross Parish, wherein both will be equally merged with each other, and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church will be designated as the principal church and Nativity of Our Lord will be designated as the secondary church.

THEREFORE, I, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, having in mind my responsibility to best address the spiritual needs of the Christian Faithful of Saint John Neumann Parish and Saint Paul of the Cross Parish specifically and the needs of the Diocese of Scranton generally, and after invoking the Holy Spirit and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, I hereby decree the following:


- In accord with canon 121, the territorial Saint John Neumann and Saint Paul of the Cross Parishes are consolidated, with both suppressed and creating a newly-merged Parish, taking Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish as its title.
- The territory of the newly-merged Parish encompasses the territory of Saint John Neumann Parish and Saint Paul of the Cross Parish, and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church will be the principal church and Nativity of Our Lord Church will be a secondary church.
- This decree is to be published to the Pastor and the Parishioners of Saint John Neumann and Saint Paul of the Cross Parishes through notice in the parish bulletins on the weekend of October 7-8, 2023 and the decree published on the website of the Diocese of Scranton.
- The effective date of this decree is the second day of the public announcement, October 8, 2023. These changes will be implemented on November 26, 2023.

I am confident that the good of souls would not be harmed by this decree.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Scranton, on September 28, 2023.



Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Scranton



Linda E. Price, J.C.L.  
Chancellor