

February 20, 2024



The Diocese of Columbus

197 E Gay St,
Columbus, OH 43215

•
Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus



The Diocese of Steubenville

422 Washington Street
Steubenville, OH 43952

•
Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Steubenville

Bishops Issue Joint Statement After Third Leadership Meeting

Bishop Paul J. Bradley (Steubenville) and Bishop Earl K. Fernandes (Columbus) along with their diocesan leadership teams met for a third time on February 15, 2024, to discuss how both dioceses could be affected by a potential merger.

During this meeting, leadership teams made significant progress in producing information that will soon be summarized into a report and submitted to Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr (Cincinnati) and the Apostolic Nunciature in March 2024. While each aspect considered cannot be definitively answered at this time, both dioceses contributed information specific to their respective diocese, and how a potential merger could impact a variety of diocesan temporal structures, such as clergy matters and financial issues.

No decision on a merger has been made. The final decision will be made by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. This process of discernment is distinct from the process of implementation should a merger occur.

The next part of this process will be preparing the report. An additional meeting may be necessary before submitting findings to finalize the report. Any further updates will be provided promptly.

Bishop Bradley and Bishop Fernandes, as well as the diocesan leadership teams, ask for the continued prayers of the clergy and laity of both dioceses for the Holy Spirit's guidance throughout the remainder of this process.

+ *Earl K. Fernandes*

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Bishop of Columbus

+ *Paul J. Bradley*

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*Apostolic Administrator of the
Diocese of Steubenville*