



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office of the Bishop
614 • 224 • 2251

DECREE OF EXTINCTIVE UNION

**of the Parish of Holy Trinity, Jackson, Ohio
of the Parish of Sts. Peter and Paul, Wellston, Ohio
of the Parish of St. Sylvester, Zaleski, Ohio**

WHEREAS, due to the decline in priestly vocations in the Diocese of Columbus, the parishes in question have shared a pastor in various iterations over the years, most recently all three being placed under the pastoral care of one priest for the past five years;

WHEREAS, the offertory of Sts. Peter and Paul and Holy Trinity have shown significant decline in recent years; The offertory of St. Sylvester has demonstrated some stability, but is dramatically lacking in being of the amount and stable enough to provide for the true needs of the parish particularly the remuneration of the parish priest;

WHEREAS, the population of the parishes has declined to the point of having 88 registered households at Sts. Peter and Paul, 65 registered households at Holy Trinity, and 50 registered households at St. Sylvester; The number of infant and adult baptisms is increasingly low at all three parishes; The Mass attendance at Holy Trinity and Sts. Peter and Paul has decreased steadily since before 2015, almost 10 years, and the Mass attendance at St. Sylvester is half of what it was at its most recent peak in 2000; The decline in population in the area, Catholic or otherwise, is not a temporary issue due to the decrease in industry and employment opportunities;

WHEREAS, the resources available to the united parish can be better allocated to furthering initiatives in evangelization and social outreach to the faithful in the current parish boundaries;

WHEREAS, a plan has been carefully developed through the Real Presence Real Future Pastoral Planning initiative in which parishioners were consulted about the pastoral needs of their parishes and those recommendations were accepted by Bishop Fernandes that the parishes of Jackson and Vinton Counties should be united together as one parish;

WHEREAS, a transition team was assembled consisting of parishioners and staff from all three parishes who aided in assisting with the implementation of the Real Presence Real Future recommendations; The transition team held meetings in March, April and May of 2024 to meet with the parishioners of each parish and hear their concerns; Information sessions were held at each parish in the above-mentioned months following the Sunday Masses to answer questions and concerns about the recommendation of the extinctive union of the three parishes of Jackson Holy Trinity, Wellston Sts. Peter and Paul and Zaleski St. Sylvester into one new parish under the title of DIVINE MERCY Parish;

WHEREAS, having consulted with the pastor of the three parishes in question according to c. 50; having heard the Presbyteral Council which was provided with the necessary information and lawfully convoked according to cc. 127 and 166 on 26 September 2024 and offered genuine consultation according to c. 515 §2 in the form of unanimous agreement with this plan;

THEREFORE, having considered the law and the facts I, Earl K. Fernandes, Bishop of Columbus, hereby decree the following:

The extinctive union of the parishes of Holy Trinity Jackson, Sts. Peter and Paul Wellston, and St. Sylvester Zaleski to form one new parish given the title "Divine Mercy" which assumes the ecclesiastical goods as well as debts and obligations of the three parishes.

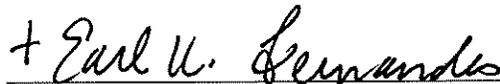
This extinctive union is to take effect on 1 January 2025.

The parish boundaries of Divine Mercy Parish will be the entirety of Jackson and Vinton Counties together.

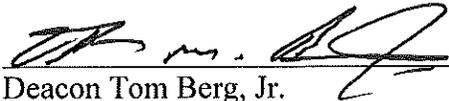
There is no change to the status or title of the parish churches of Holy Trinity Jackson, Sts. Peter and Paul Wellston and St. Sylvester Zaleski, which remain parish churches for Divine Mercy Parish.

This decree shall be promulgated by publication on the Diocesan website, in *The Catholic Times* diocesan newspaper, and disseminated in the affected parishes in the Sunday bulletin and other means of social communication as deemed appropriate by the pastor.

Given at the Chancery Office, 198 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio this 27th day of September, 2024.



Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus



Deacon Tom Berg, Jr.
Chancellor

