



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office of the Bishop
614 • 224 • 2251

DECREE OF EXTINCTIVE UNION

**of the Parish of St. Leonard, Heath, Ohio
with the Parish of St. Francis de Sales, Newark, Ohio**

WHEREAS, due to the decline in priestly vocations in the Diocese of Columbus, the parish of St. Leonard has shared a pastor in various iterations over the years. For a period of time this was with the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and most recently with the parish of St. Francis de Sales, Newark;

WHEREAS, the offertory of St. Leonard has shown significant decline in recent years. The offertory of St. Leonard has demonstrated decline in revenue of 4% from 2018 to 2024, certainly not in keeping with high inflation and the financial needs of the parish. These financial pressures are exacerbated by the \$469,016 estimated cost of repairs and deferred maintenance between the rectory and the church building. Even with a small amount in parish savings, an increase of 150 – 200% in offertory is estimated to be needed to be able to cover this deferred maintenance;

WHEREAS, the population of the parish has declined over the years with 275 registered parishioners in 2013 and 180 registered parishioners in 2024. The number of baptisms is increasingly low at 10 baptisms 10 years ago and 2 baptisms in 2023. The Mass attendance at St. Leonard has decreased steadily with an average of 264 at weekend masses 10 years ago to 170 in the October 2024 count. This is all while the city of Heath has seen modest growth in that time period;

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 over an 18-month period of time. The final recommendation of Real Presence Real Future for St. Leonard parish was rejected by Bishop Fernandes in June 2023 with the qualification that the model for St. Leonard be re-evaluated at a later date when there was a change in pastoral leadership;

WHEREAS, Town hall meetings were held on 30 April and 11 June 2024 during which parishioners received clarification about the Real Presence Real Future plan and were able to ask questions and express concerns which were recorded and reviewed;

WHEREAS, a transition team was assembled for St. Leonard Parish which worked in collaboration with the staff of St. Francis de Sales Parish to assess the condition of St. Leonard Parish and review the feedback from the town halls;

WHEREAS, the resources available to the united parish can be better allocated to furthering initiatives in evangelization, catechesis, faith formation and social outreach to the faithful and residents of the new parish;

WHEREAS, having consulted with the pastor of St. Francis de Sales and the Parochial Administrator of St. Leonard according to Canon 50; having heard the Presbyteral Council which was provided with the necessary information and lawfully convoked according to Canons 127 and 166 on 8 January 2025 and offered genuine consultation according to Canon 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:

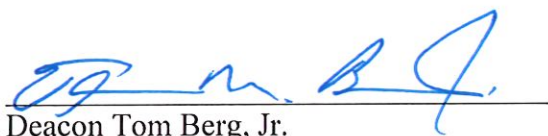
- 1) The extinctive union of the parishes of St. Francis de Sales Newark and St. Leonard Heath. The parish of St. Leonard is effectively suppressed and the territory, assets, and liabilities of St. Leonard are assumed by the parish of St. Francis de Sales.
- 2) The new boundaries for St. Francis de Sales Parish, the parish church for which is located at 40 Granville St., Newark, OH 43055-4998 are the following:

The coordinates of the parish's boundaries are defined by the following latitudinal/longitudinal coordinates and geographic landmarks. Northern boundary: Starting at 40.24581, -82.48069 on Justin Road, an air-line east 40.24581, -82.47727; then east on the county boundary to the intersection of the Licking-Knox county line and Bell Church and Cooksey roads. Eastern boundary: Starting at the intersection of the Licking-Knox county boundary and Bell Church and Cooksey roads, southeast on the center of Cooksey Road to Blacksnake Road; east on the center of Blacksnake Road to Peatmoss Road; south on the center of Peatmoss Road to Dog Hollow Road; south on the center of Dog Hollow Road to Horns Hill Road; south on the center of Horns Hill Road to the point where it becomes Horns Hill Rd. NE, continuing south on the center of Horns Hill Road NE to the intersection of Horns Hill Road NE, Cedar Run Road NE, and Waterworks Road; west on the center of Waterworks Road to the center of the North Fork Licking River; south on the center of the North Fork Licking River to the confluence of the North Fork Licking and South Fork Licking rivers. which forms the Licking River at 40.05307, -82.39153; east on the Licking River to 40.05235, -82.38054, which is the intersection of the Licking River and the northeast corner of the Heath City limits; south on the Heath City boundary to 40.04042, -82.38174; east on the city boundary to 40.04033, -82.38010; south on the city boundary to Watson Road SE; east on the center of Watson Road SE to 40.03893, -82.37285; southwest on the city boundary to Blue Jay at 40.03042, -82.37498; east on the center of Blue Jay Road to 40.03005, -82.37045; south on the city boundary to 40.02288, -82.37124; west on the city boundary to 40.02325, -82.37710; south on the city boundary to 40.019669, -82.37761; west on the city boundary to 40.01997, -82.38393; south on an air-line to the intersection of Linville Road SE and Fairmount Road; south on the center of Fairmount Road to Dorsey Mill Road SE; west on the center of Dorsey Mill Road SE to State Route 13; south on the center of State Route 13 to Davis Drive. Southern boundary: Starting at the intersection of Davis Drive, west on the center of Davis Drive to Lake Drive Road; south on the center of Lake Drive Road to Ridgley Tract Road SE; northwest on Ridgley Tract Road SE to Thornwood Drive SW. Western boundary: Starting at the intersection of Ridgley Tract Road SE and Thornwood Drive SW, north on the center of Thornwood Drive SW to Thornwood Crossing; north on the center of Thornwood Crossing to State Route 16; northeast on the center of State Route 16 to Granville Road; northeast on the center of Granville Road to Country Club Drive; north on the center of Country Club Drive to Sharon Valley Road NE; northwest on center of Sharon Valley Road NE to Welsh Hills Road NE; north on the center of Welsh Hills Road NE to Dry Creek Road NE; northwest on the center of Dry Creek Road NE to Sunnyside Road; north on the center of Sunnyside Road and Chestnut Hill Road; an air-line north from the intersection of Sunnyside and Chestnut Hill roads to the intersection of Marion Road NE and Dutch Lane NE; north on the center of Marion Road NE to Reynolds Road NE; north on the center of Reynolds Road NE to Centennial Road NE; north on the center of Centennial Road NE to Smoketown Road; north

on the center of Smoketown Road to Homer Road NE; southeast on the center of Homer Road NE to Justin Road; north on the center of Justin Road to 40.24581, -82.48069.

- 3) The parish church of St. Leonard retains its title, but is now a non-parochial church in the territory of St. Francis de Sales. The sacramental records for which are now held at St. Francis de Sales.
- 4) This extinctive union takes effect upon promulgation of this decree which is to 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 Street, Columbus, Ohio this 15th Day of January 2025.


Deacon Tom Berg, Jr.
Chancellor



Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus

