



Joseph Charles Bambera

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA
EPISCOPUS SCRANTONENSIS



DECREE

In the name of God. Amen.

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Scranton's *Vision 2030: Creating Parish Communities Rooted in the Life of Jesus Christ*, a pastoral planning process addressing the long-range needs and challenges of the Diocese of Scranton, looks 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, according to *CIC* c. 381 §1, the jurisdiction exercised by the diocesan bishop is ordinary, proper, and immediate and is provided to him in the same diocese entrusted to him for the exercise of his pastoral function, and;

WHEREAS, according to *CIC* c. 515 §1, a parish is a defined community of the Christian Faithful stably constituted within the particular church, and, according to *CIC* c. 515 §3, possesses juridic personality *ipso iure* and whose pastoral care is entrusted to its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop, and;

WHEREAS, through the aforementioned exercise of jurisdiction in the particular church entrusted to his care, according to *CIC* c. 515 §2, the diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress, or notably alter parishes always having heard the presbyteral council prior to the aforementioned action, and;

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Scranton's *Vision 2030* pastoral planning process evaluates the viability of parishes based on the following priority drivers:

- Equitable distribution of clergy based on population of Catholic members of the Christian Faithful;
- Financial viability of parishes;
- Participation in sacramental life of parishes by the Christian Faithful;
- Infrastructure needs of parish facilities;
- Growth or decline of overall population in a particular area, and;

WHEREAS, Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish, a territorial parish, has as its sole church Saint Mary, Help of Christians Church, located at 535 North Main Street in Pittston, Pennsylvania, and;

WHEREAS, due to the decreasing number of clergy, the Reverend Joseph Elston is the Pastor of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish and two additional parishes, namely, Saint Joseph Mareello Parish, a personal parish for Catholics of Italian heritage, and the territorial Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston, and;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned three parishes have experienced a serious reduction of the Christian Faithful participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of the parishes due to decreased population, aging population and relocation of residents of the territory:

- From 2019 to 2025 the total number of registered parishioners has decreased by 47 percent (from 8,292 to 4,409);
- From 2019 to 2025 the total Mass attendance has decreased by 39 percent (628 fewer individuals attending);
- From 2019 to 2025 the number of K-8 children enrolled in Religious Education has decreased by 117 students, and;

WHEREAS, from 2019-2025, at Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish the total Mass attendance has decreased by 73 percent (386 fewer individuals attending), and;

WHEREAS, due to limited finances Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish relies on money from savings to pay operational expenses, with nearly \$70,000 taken from savings to meet expenses in the 2025 fiscal year, and;

WHEREAS, in fulfillment of *CIC* c. 50, Father Elston presented members of the finance and pastoral councils of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish with the relevant priority drivers for the proposed consolidation with Saint John the Evangelist Parish (by means of a suppression of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish in an extinctive union with Saint John the Evangelist Parish), soliciting opinions and feedback from the same council members, and;

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2026, the undersigned bishop consulted with the Episcopal Council and heard its recommendations, and;

WHEREAS, on May 13, 2026, a parish information session on this proposed consolidation with Saint John the Evangelist Parish was held as a public meeting, during which feedback and opinions were heard, and;

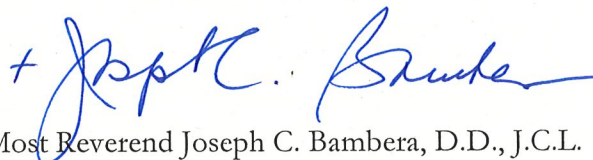
WHEREAS, on May 19, 2026, the undersigned diocesan bishop heard the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton, having deliberated the facts of the aforementioned priority drivers and the proposed canonical action of suppression of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish by means of an extinctive union with Saint John the Evangelist Parish;

THEREFORE, I, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, having the responsibility to address the spiritual needs of the Christian Faithful of the Diocese of Scranton generally and of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish specifically and having determined that there will be no detriment to the good of souls, hereby decree the following:

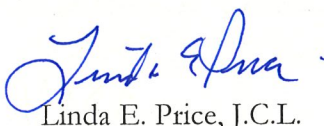
- There will be a suppression of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish, Pittston, in an extinctive union with Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Pittston, with the suppression taking effect on July 1, 2026;
- Saint Mary, Help of Christians Church and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church will be secondary churches of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, which will be renamed Communion of Saints Parish;
- This is to be published to the Pastor and Parishioners of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish through publication in the joint parish bulletin on the weekend of June 13-14, 2026, and the decree is to be published on the diocesan website on June 13, 2026.

FURTHERMORE, should parishioners of Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish decide to file recourse against this decree they are required *ad validitatem*, in light of the prescripts of *CIC* cc. 1732-1739, to submit a petition to the undersigned within ten useful days of the actual or presumed notification of this decree. Moreover, should recourse against this decree be lodged, suspensive effect happens *ipso iure*.

Given at the Chancery Building of the Diocese of Scranton on the 4th day of June in the Year of Our Lord, 2026.



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



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