



# 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**, Saint Joseph Marelo Parish, a personal parish for Catholics of Italian heritage, has as its sole church Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, located at 237 William Street in Pittston, Pennsylvania, and;

**WHEREAS**, due to the decreasing number of clergy, the Reverend Joseph Elston is the Pastor of Saint Joseph Marelo Parish and two territorial Pittston parishes, namely, Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish and Saint John the Evangelist Parish, and;

**WHEREAS**, Saint Joseph Marelo Parish has experienced a serious reduction of the Christian Faithful participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of the parish due to decreased population, aging population and relocation of residents of the territory:

- From 2019 to 2025 the number of parishioners has decreased from 3278 to 1543, and;

**WHEREAS**, Saint Joseph Marelo Parish has liabilities totaling \$1,855,487, and;

**WHEREAS**, in fulfillment of *CIC* c. 50, Father Elston presented members of the finance and pastoral councils of Saint Joseph Marelo Parish with the relevant priority drivers for the proposed absolute suppression of Saint Joseph Marelo 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 suppression and the consolidation of the neighboring linked parishes was held as a public meeting, during which feedback and opinions were heard, and;

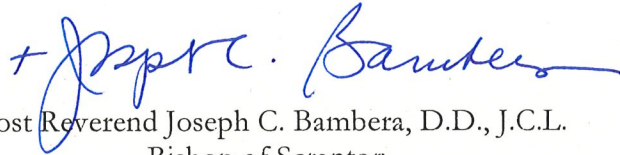
**WHEREAS**, on May 19, 2026, the undersigned diocesan bishop heard the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton, having deliberated the facts of the aforementioned priority drivers and the proposed canonical action of absolute suppression of Saint Joseph Marelo Parish;

**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 Saint Joseph Marelo Parish specifically and having determined that there will be no detriment to the good of souls, hereby decree the following:

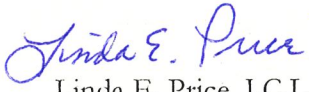
- There will be an absolute suppression of Saint Joseph Marelo Parish, with the suppression taking effect on July 1, 2026.
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and Saint Mary, Help of Christians Church will be secondary churches of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, which will be renamed Communion of Saints Parish.
- This is to be published to the Pastor and Parishioners of Saint Joseph Marelo 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 Saint Joseph Mareello 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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