



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 Patrick Parish, a territorial parish of the Diocese of Scranton, has as its sole worship site Saint Patrick Church, located at 411 Allegheny Street in White Haven, and;

WHEREAS, due to the decreasing number of clergy, the Reverend Michael J. Kloton is the Administrator of Saint Patrick Parish while also the Pastor of two neighboring parishes, Good Shepherd Parish in Drums and Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Freeland, and;

WHEREAS, in regard to the financial viability of Saint Patrick Parish:

- Over the past five years Saint Patrick Parish has lost \$124,742 (approximately \$25,000 per year), with a loss of \$22,652 in 2024 and a loss of \$40,000 in 2025;
- Currently, the parish has approximately \$100,000 in operating accounts for covering all bills, future losses and capital improvements; the parish has an outstanding diocesan loan of \$359,164 for the parish center;
- The Parish Administrator has expressed the suppression of Saint Patrick Parish would allow for cost savings while the financial issues continue to be addressed, and;

WHEREAS, Saint Patrick 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 total number of registered parishioners has decreased by 50 percent (from 600 to 299 members); and;

WHEREAS, the roof of Saint Patrick Church is now 20 years old with minor leaks and will most likely need replacement soon. Additional infrastructure concerns include issues with windows and the façade of the parish center building, with an estimated repair cost of \$127,000, and;

WHEREAS, in fulfillment of *CIC* c. 50, Father Kloton presented members of the finance and pastoral councils of Saint Patrick Parish with the relevant priority drivers for the suppression of Saint Patrick 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 April 29, 2026, a parish information session on this proposed suppression of Saint Patrick Parish, with Saint Patrick Church becoming a secondary church of the neighboring Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Freeland, was held as a public meeting, during which feedback and opinions were heard, and;

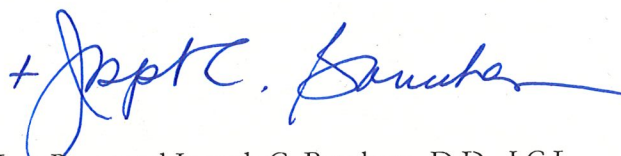
WHEREAS, on May 19, 2026, the undersigned diocesan bishop heard the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton, having deliberated the facts of the aforementioned priority drivers and the proposed canonical action of suppression of Saint Patrick Parish;

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

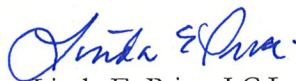
- There will be a suppression of Saint Patrick Parish, White Haven, in an extinctive union with Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Freeland, with the suppression taking effect on July 1, 2026.
- The principal church of the newly modified parish will be Saint Ann Church, 898 Centre Street, Freeland. Saint Patrick Church, 411 Allegheny Street, White Haven, will become a secondary worship site of the newly modified parish.
- The name of the newly modified parish will remain Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish.
- This is to be published to the Pastor and Parishioners of Saint Patrick Parish through publication in the parish bulletin on the weekend of June 13-14th, and the decree is to be published on the diocesan website on June 13, 2026.

FURTHERMORE, should parishioners of Saint Patrick Parish decide to file recourse against this decree they are required *ad validitatem*, in light of the precepts 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