



DECREE
Valente communicationes

Preamble

By strengthening communication, engaging youth, and especially by cultivating a deep Eucharistic Spirituality, the parishes of the Four Pillars in Faith Area Catholic Community (ACC) have journeyed together on the East End of the Diocese of Saint Cloud. In response to my call, leadership of the four parishes has drafted a pastoral plan and presented it to the Committee for the Affirmation of Plans (CAP) which has, in its turn, recommended it to me. In accord with this plan and to strive for a future of holiness and grace, I issue this decree, which contains a number of decisions and precepts drawn from the ACC's plan but chiefly enacts the merger of the parishes of St. Louis Bertrand in Foreston, St. Mary in Milaca, St. Mary in Mora, and St. Kathryn in Ogilvie into one new parish, combining the churches, territories, assets, rights, and obligations of all four.

Art. I - Merger

General motivations from the diocesan situation

Whereas in 2019, in response to declining numbers of clergy the Bishop Emeritus, Donald Kettler, instructed the parishes of the diocese to form ACCs;

Whereas, upon my consecration as Bishop of the Diocese of St. Cloud in 2023, I spent time listening to the People of the Diocese of Saint Cloud, both clergy and lay, and became aware of poor health and overwork of the clergy, declining participation in religious education programs, shifts away from the demographics that had originally motivated the foundation of the majority of parishes in the diocese, inadequate staffing, inaccessible or dangerous parochial buildings, inefficient use of ecclesial resources, and instances of a parochialism which – though supportive of the local community – expressed indifference to or even ignorance of communion with the Diocesan and Universal Church (cc. 384, 392, 529 §2);

Whereas, in order to address these concerns, I initiated the All Things New Planning Process, established parameters as a guide for each ACC to reform in a manner best suited to present and anticipated pastoral needs, and called upon all ACCs of the diocese to form planning councils and present plans by December 31, 2025;

Motivations particular to the parishes concerned

Whereas, from 2005 onward, finding a way to provide a resident pastor for each of the parishes of this ACC has proven impossible with the number of clergy – the parish in Ogilvie, in fact, has never had a resident pastor;

Whereas, to nevertheless supply some pastoral care, it appears that two of these four parishes utilized the services of a lay woman as Parish Life Coordinator, starting in 2005, while those parishes were also assigned a canonical pastor and sacramental minister;

Whereas, St. Mary in Milaca and St. Louis Bertrand in Foreston were served by the Crosier Community in Onamia, who provided pastors until 2019, after which, due to their own declining numbers they pulled back from these parishes;

Whereas, in 2014, a couple of permanent deacons shared in the daily pastoral care of the Parishes of St. Mary in Milaca and St. Louis Bertrand in Foreston, somewhat in accord with the provision found at c. 517 §2, though it is not clear that the “priest with the powers and faculties of a pastor” was uniformly supplied to all four parishes over this time, perhaps due to the shortage of clergy;

Whereas, on the whole, Bishop Emeritus Donald Kettler, holding it objectively better to supply three of the four with a non-resident pastor, following an arrangement utilized by his predecessor and utilized by him across the diocese, rather than leaving the four parishes of the ACC entirely vacant, assigned Fr. Derek Wiechmann as pastor to all four in 2019, but only obliged him to reside in one, any other arrangement being physically impossible;

Whereas that same year, 2019, having united the four parishes under the leadership of one pastor, the Bishop Emeritus also called the four to form the Four Pillars in Faith Area Catholic Community;

Whereas, under Fr. Wiechmann’s leadership, but also in accord with the initiative of members of the lay faithful in the parishes, the parishes sought to improve inter-parish communion by holding events for the whole ACC at each parish campus in turn, engaging collectively with the youth of all four parishes, and a continued fostering of a Eucharistic faith, centered on that Most August Sacrament, the Source and Summit of the unity of the whole Body of Christ;

Whereas this Eucharistic faith was of such a degree that it fostered and made fruitful a nearly perpetual adoration chapel in the Parish of St. Louis Bertrand, which was built in 2001, and is equally comprised of adorers from St. Louis Bertrand and St. Mary in Milaca;

Whereas the Parish of St. Mary in Mora, one of the four in the ACC, was a stop on the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage during the National Eucharistic Revival;

Whereas, despite the flourishing collaboration experienced by the ACC under Fr. Wiechmann, a diminishing number of clergy and pastoral needs elsewhere in the diocese obliged Fr. Wiechmann to transfer to another non-canonical, super-parochial Area Catholic Community in 2023, and Fr. Timothy Gapinski was transferred in order to become pastor of each of the four parishes of the Four Pillars in Faith ACC, with the same dispensations regarding the obligation of residency which his predecessor required;

Whereas, in response to my aforementioned request to develop an ACC Pastoral Plan, the parishes of the Four Pillars in Faith ACC formed an ACC Planning Committee and developed

two potential pastoral plans, each ordered towards improving priest health, efficient use of ecclesial resources, and building the already present collaboration of the lay faithful across parochial boundaries – as their own plan describes it, reforming the ACC as “a place of more cooperation and less competition, where parishioners do not have one-fourth of a pastor, but are united in one flock with one pastor;”

Whereas the aforementioned plans were arrived at after deliberation by the ACC’s own Planning Council, as well as “town hall” style meetings in each of the four parishes, indicating their broadly consultative nature;

Whereas the aforementioned plans are consistent with the parameters I provided as guidelines for the discernment process, yet formulated out of the particular situation of each parish;

Whereas, on October 27, 2025, the plans were reviewed by the CAP, a panel consisting of clergy and laity holding expertise in finance, ecclesiastical law, corporate organization, and pastoral care, and the CAP recommended to me the “Two-Site Option,” specifically that version which recommends both the merger of the four parishes in an extinctive union and the “closure” of the churches of St. Louis Bertrand and St. Kathryn;

Whereas, having received the affirmed plan, I recognized as a requirement what is established by c. 515 §2 and presented the proposed merger to the Presbyteral Council on December 9, 2025, requesting a consultative vote;

Whereas the Presbyteral Council recommended, by a consultative vote, that I proceed with the proposed merger;

Whereas the proposed merger fulfills parameters of the All Things New Planning Process, especially the reduction of the overall number of corporations in the ACC, and likewise is, in my judgment, a prudent remedy to the general challenges to health and holiness in the Diocese of Saint Cloud, especially those challenges to clergy health, those resulting from changing language groups, cultures, and demographics, those born of a disordered parochialism and an inefficient and even irresponsible utilization of ecclesiastical goods for which I and my predecessors bear a most grave responsibility;

Whereas, mindful of the Legislator’s general principle that a pastor is to serve only one parish (c. 526 §1), the proposed merger better aligns with the current and anticipated numbers of available pastors in the Diocese, as well as the ACC in particular, and it arranges things to better meet the customary expectations of the Faithful with regard to parochial pastoral ministry – truly “one flock with one pastor;”

Whereas the proposed merger adjusts the governing structures to ease co-responsible governance of the current parishes, establishing one set of trustees and one finance council who share the same mandate as the pastor;

Whereas the proposed merger affords the opportunity for the pastor to utilize these more efficient governance structures and more easily accessible ecclesiastical goods, granting him the

opportunity to spend less time on administrative tasks and more time on pastoral care, which gives benefit to priest *and* parishioner health;

Whereas the anticipated Mass Schedule, post-merger, according to the discernment of the planning council and the CAP, still affords easy access to celebrations of Mass and other sacraments to all within the current ACC and, as the minutes of the CAP Meeting note, even outside the ACC;

Whereas the pastor, Fr. Gapinski, as well as the ACC Planning Council have discerned that having multiple Masses in a particular church building is considered, in the ACC, a mark of parish vitality;

Whereas Fr. Gapinski currently travels at least 14,000 miles a year, trying to maintain some presence at all four sites, and the submitted plan reflects the discernment that, logically, the pastor of the merged parish would be more available for ministry at any particular parish campus, were he to only have to frequently travel between just two ecclesial sites;

Whereas there are nursing homes in Mora and Milaca, home to a too-easily marginalized senior population;

Whereas representatives of the ACC, when meeting with the CAP, reported their discernment that keeping all churches in the ACC in active use was not a viable option for the long-term health of the community, and it is my conclusion that we cannot ever reasonably consider ceasing the regular use of a particular parish's only available church;

Whereas the proposed merger affords the opportunity to designate the church of St. Mary in Milaca as the primary church of the merged parish and the opportunity to designate the church of St. Mary in Mora as a partner church, steps in the recommended plan which the ACC's own planning council discerned, believing it would help to unify the Catholics of the ACC through more common and collaborative liturgical action;

Whereas the proposed merger affords the opportunity to work out of one consolidated office location, a step in the recommended plan which the ACC's own planning council discerned, believing it would help to reduce duplication of efforts and tasks, ease communication, increase efficiency, and reduce overall costs and thus burden on limited ecclesiastical resources;

Whereas the proposed merger, by pooling parochial resources, affords the opportunity to hire a business administrator to assist the pastor in building the aforementioned unified office and staff;

Whereas it must be acknowledged that were each parish to have its own proper pastor, rather than paying a part of the support of Fr. Gapinski as they now do, they would quickly, at their current levels of income and expense, go into debt;

Whereas the proposed merger and associated business administrator likewise offer the opportunity to develop a budget in light of reducing the overall number of buildings, an element of the recommended plan which the ACC's own planning council determined would allow for

reducing maintenance expenses and redirecting those funds towards evangelical efforts and support of those specialized groups within the parishes, such as youth;

Whereas the proposed merger draws together historic and distinct communities, creating the vision of the parish set forth by Pope Francis, “a community of communities” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 28), building on past collaboration to avoid any semblance of the small, isolated, homogenous, self-selecting communities that can promote a parochialism contrary to the unifying message of the Gospel;

Whereas the proposed merger is also, in my judgment and in accord with the foregoing observations and motivations, for the good of the souls of the parishioners of the parishes of the Four Pillars in Faith ACC;

§1 I hereby decree that the parishes of St. Louis Bertrand in Foreston, St. Mary in Milaca, St. Mary in Mora, and St. Kathryn in Ogilvie are merged into an extinctive union, forming the new Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, comprising the territory, assets, rights, and obligations previously included in each parish.

And, whereas Fr. Timothy Gapinski is known to be of sound doctrine and uprightness of character, and having been in the ACC since 2023, has continued to foster the unity and cooperation of the parish communities;

§2 I hereby appoint Rev. Timothy Gapinski as pastor of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families (cc. 521, 523); and I hereby dispense from the obligation of taking possession in accord with c. 527 §2, such that he takes possession immediately, this decree serving as sufficient notification to the people of the parish (see Art. X below).

Pursuant to this;

Art. II - Designation of Primary Parochial Church

Whereas the plan submitted by the ACC Planning Council directed that the parochial church of St. Mary in Milaca be designated the Primary Church;

Whereas it is understood that a Primary Church means the church at which high feasts are celebrated, *ie Triduum*, Holy Days of Obligation, etc.;

Whereas, insofar as possible, the Primary Church is to be reflexively understood as *the* parochial church of the parish, *ie* where the community would gather if the parish is meeting “at the church” for some function;

§1 I hereby decree that St. Mary in Milaca is the primary church of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families. Further, in order to enact this provision, I hereby order that:

1° As of July 1, 2028, all celebrations of the Nativity of the Lord, other Holy Days of Obligation which do not occur on a Sunday, the Triduum, and the Sunday of the Resurrection are to take place primarily in the church of St. Mary in Milaca.

2° As of that same date stipulated above, the Most Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved in St. Mary in Milaca and St. Mary in Mora, i.e. the primary and partner church of the parish only, and not in any other church of the parish.

Art. III - Designation of Partner Church

Whereas the plan submitted by the ACC Planning Council and approved by the CAP directed that the church of St. Mary in Mora be designated as a partner church of the newly merged parish;

Whereas it is understood that a partner church means a church at which a weekend Mass is still regularly celebrated, insofar as clergy are available;

I hereby decree that St. Mary in Mora is designated as a partner church of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families.

Art. IV - Disposition of the churches of St. Louis Bertrand and St. Kathryn

Whereas the plan submitted by the ACC Planning Council and approved by the CAP directed that the churches of St. Louis Bertrand and St. Kathryn be relegated to secular use and sold;

Whereas, during the meeting with the CAP, the pastor reported that meetings with the parish and the ACC Planning Council had determined the general sentiment of parishioners runs toward selling a church if it is no longer going to be routinely used for sacraments, rather than leaving it sit unused;

Whereas, cognizant of the law, I observe that c. 1214 defines a church as a sacred building set aside for divine worship to which the faithful have right of access, especially for public acts of divine worship;

Whereas the perpetual nature of the consecration of a church is implied by the rigorous requirements of c. 1222 §2, namely that it may not be relegated to secular use without multiple grave reasons, consultation with the Presbyteral Council, and the consent of those who would be able to lawfully claim rights in the church;

Whereas relegation to secular use, as described in c. 1222 §2 would be required before transferring ownership to a secular organization, as the recommended plan seems to anticipate (see CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes and the Closure, Relegation and Alienation of Churches, 30 April 2013, reprinted with permission of Msgr. Antoni Neri, Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Clergy, in *The Jurist*, 73 (2013), 211-219, specifically see pg. 218);

Whereas it would be illegitimate and unbecoming of me, at this time, not having ascertained the causes nor taken the steps mentioned in c. 1222 §2, to decree the relegation to secular use of the church of the aforementioned churches;

Whereas it would likewise be illegitimate and unbecoming of me to ignore that which was discerned by the ACC Planning Council and in turn approved and recommended to me by the CAP (cc. 212 §§2 and 3; 383);

I hereby decree the following regarding the disposition of the other churches of the ACC:

§1 St. Louis Bertrand

1° The pastor of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families is to submit a report to me on December 31, 2027, regarding alternative uses of St. Louis Bertrand, even secular uses, as well as the motivations for those uses, indicating any which would rise to the level of grave causes.

2° Pursuant to this, the pastor is to consult members of the Finance Council (see Article VIII), and he may utilize other collaborative structures, either established or *ad hoc*, for preparation of the aforementioned report.

3° I pastorally advise (c. 1311) that anyone who hinders the pastor in the investigation required and composition of the aforementioned report, whether by misuse of social communications, campaigns of disinformation, or other public efforts risks committing the delict established at c. 1373 – “provoking disobedience against the Ordinary”

§2 St. Kathryn

1° St. Kathryn is to be opened once a year for prayer on July 14 or the nearest Sunday Celebration, that the Faithful might attain the plenary indulgence associated with a pious visit to the church on that day.

2° As of July 12, 2026 the Blessed Sacrament will no longer be reserved in the Church of St. Kathryn.

3° The pastor of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families is to submit a report to me by December 31, 2027, regarding alternative uses of St. Kathryn, even secular ones, as well as the motivations for those uses, indicating any which would rise to the level of grave causes.

4° Pursuant to this, the pastor is to consult members of the Finance Council (see Article VIII), and he may utilize other collaborative structures, either established or *ad hoc*, for preparation of the aforementioned report.

5° I pastorally advise (c. 1311) that anyone who hinders the pastor in the investigation required and composition of the aforementioned report, whether by misuse of social communications, campaigns of disinformation, or other public efforts risks committing the delict established at c. 1373 – “provoking disobedience against the Ordinary”

Art. V - Allocation of assets

Whereas the aforementioned parishes are joined into an extinctive union, forming one new parish, which is by law a public juridic person (c. 515 §3);

Whereas, whenever public juridic persons are amalgamated in such a way as to create a new public juridic person, the new public juridic person obtains both the rights and obligations which belonged to the previous public juridic persons, giving due regard to the wishes of founders, benefactors, and those who legitimately claim rights (c. 121);

Whereas I am mindful to safeguard, through particular arrangements, the aforementioned wishes;

Whereas each of the parishes involved in this merger possess a variety of unrestricted funds which are easily amalgamated;

Whereas each of the parishes involved in this merger possess some restricted funds as well, intended for particular purposes not necessarily shared by each parish;

Whereas, likewise, it is the consistent guidance of the Apostolic See that, in the event of a merger of parishes that results in the extinction of one or more parishes, the money should follow the people, rather than be acquired by the juridic person hierarchically superior to the extinguished parish or parishes;

§1 I hereby enumerate the real rights and obligations, and direct the allocation of the assets of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families as such:

All physical assets of the prior four parishes belong to the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families. This includes, but is not limited to, all land, buildings, items donated to the prior parishes, and those items included in inventories of the prior parishes (c. 1283); all account values in the details below are from the end of March, 2026;

1° Cemeteries and perpetual care funds

The Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families acquires the cemeteries and associated assets of the four Catholic cemeteries located within its territories:

- Cemetery of St. Louis Bertrand located in the south-east part of the city of Foreston at 108 School Street, comprised of 2.79 acres with its cemetery savings and checking accounts.
 - Cemetery Investment Fund: \$25,099.50
 - Cemetery Checking: \$6,813.33
- Cemetery of St. Mary located in the east side of the city of Milaca at the south-west junction of MN HWY 23 and County Road 2, comprising of 2.99 acres with its cemetery savings and checking accounts.
 - Cemetery Catholic Foundation Savings: \$15,043.78
 - Cemetery Checking: \$6,249.46
- Cemetery of St. Kathryn located north-west of the city of Ogilvie off of MN HWY 47, comprising of 1.7 acres with its cemetery savings and checking accounts.
 - Cemetery Savings: \$17,181.26
 - Cemetery Checking: \$11,115.85

- Cemetery of St. Mary located south-east of the city of Mora at 1887 Liberty Street, comprising of 4.0 acres with its cemetery savings and checking accounts.
 - Cemetery Investment Fund: \$34,932.46
 - Cemetery Checking: \$10,338.29

The Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families is obliged to maintain these cemeteries and their respective funds, *ie* money donated to or paid for a plot in one cemetery is not to be used for the upkeep of a different cemetery; the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families is also obligated to honor all present contracts regarding burial plot purchase agreements.

2° Restricted funds and their purposes

Parishioner Emergency Funds are to be consolidated for the use of any parishioner of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families.

- Foreston: \$2,860.42
- Milaca: \$4,264.04

Saint Carlo Acutis Youth Funds and other Youth Funds are to be consolidated for youth activities in the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families.

- Foreston: \$446.00
- Milaca: \$1,416.00
 - SLB/SM Youth: \$3,296.99
- Ogilvie: \$259.11
- Mora: \$1,600.22
 - Steubenville/Youth: \$1,757.03

Mass Stipend funds should be consolidated.

- Foreston: \$582.00
- Milaca: \$370.00
- Ogilvie: \$145.08
- Mora: \$435.00

Memorial funds, Building funds, and other restricted funds for decorating are to be examined by the Pastor of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, in consultation with the Finance Council of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, in order to determine how best to consolidate or use those funds most in accord with the desire of the donors; if the Pastor cannot, even with the help of the Finance Council, reach satisfactory conclusions to these questions, he is to consult the local ordinary (see cc. 1276, 1276, 1301, 1310 §2).

- Memorial Funds
 - Foreston: \$804.96
 - Milaca: \$13,188.85
 - Mora: \$11,136.15
- Building Funds
 - Foreston
 - Main: \$2,492.76

- Chapel: \$7,392.94
- Sound System: \$250.00
- Milaca: \$959.00
- Ogilvie: \$5,134.25
- Mora: \$3,356.37

Other restricted funds are to be examined by the Pastor of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, in consultation with the Finance Council of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, in order to determine, as much as possible, the intent of donors and how the funds may be utilized, if at all, in the new Parish; if the Pastor cannot, even with the help of the Finance Council, reach satisfactory conclusions to these questions, he is to consult the local ordinary (see cc. 1276, 1276, 1301, 1310 §2).

- Foreston
 - St. Louis Christian Women
 - Eastern Deanery DCCW
- Milaca
 - Discernment Retreat: \$6,234.61
 - Restricted Savings: \$188,157.05
 - Restricted Savings in CDs: \$109,350.96
 - Guild Checking: \$5,295.50
 - Guild Savings: \$6,216.48
 - Guild CD: \$7,465.59
- Ogilvie
 - Religious Education: \$783.01
- Mora
 - Events: \$1,363.54

3° General operating fund

All of the general accounts indicated are to be utilized as unrestricted funds by the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, without prejudice to those provisions of civil law that may limit how the funds are used until the merger has been realized in civil law (see §6 of this Article).

- Foreston
 - General Checking: \$3,701.38
 - General Savings: \$113,922.45
 - General Saving in CDs: \$155,306.02
- Milaca
 - General Checking: \$57,030.39
 - General Savings: \$107,756.18
 - General Saving in CDs: \$109,350.96
- Ogilvie
 - General Checking: \$7,280.26
 - General Savings: \$24,323.55
- Mora
 - General Checking: \$45.66
 - General Savings: \$25,858.90

- Edward Jones General Account: \$23,634.77

§2 Parishioners of the presently existing parishes are to be informed by appropriate means that their registration automatically transfers to the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families on May 3, 2026; however, they are always free to register in another parish at any time.

§3 Further, they are to be informed that if they register in another parish, an equitable portion of the unrestricted liquid assets of their pre-merger parish of registration will be sent to the parish in which they have newly registered so long as they meet the following two conditions:

- 1° The parishioner has made an unrestricted donation to their pre-merger parish of registration;**
- 2° Their new parish of registration, which is neither the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, nor one of the parishes that merged to form it, informs St. Joseph, Pillar of Families of the parishioner's new registration by July 1, 2027.**

§4 A parishioner's equitable portion of the unrestricted liquid assets of his or her pre-merger parish of registration is determined by taking the total amount of cash, accounts receivable, and investments less restricted funds (cash or investments) held by that parish at the close of business on May 1, 2026, and dividing that value by the total number of currently registered parishioners who have donated at least one dollar to the parish on or after May 1, 2026.

§5 Steps should be taken to administer appropriately the assets of the newly merged parish before July 1, 2027, anticipating that some parishioners may register elsewhere.

§6 Further, I hereby order that the pastor and the trustees of the parish corporations, execute those instruments which are necessary to reflect in civil law the foregoing amalgamation of rights and obligations, as well as the establishment of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, by June 30, 2027, according to the following:

- 1° Prior to the civil merger of the parish corporations, an audit of each corporation is completed by the Finance Office of the Diocese of Saint Cloud.**
- 2° No utilization of the funds of the canonically merged parish should place the existing parish corporations or their administrator in legal jeopardy; to this end, the "Merger Handbook" of the Diocesan Finance Office should be consulted.**
- 3° At each step, care and sensitivity to donors should be exercised, mindful that donations to the Church generally remove any restrictions on the utilization of that donation, except where carefully and explicitly indicated by the donor and recognized by the one receiving the donation on the Church's behalf.**

Art. VI - Reorganization of staff

Whereas the recommended plan included the discernment that, in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs, the newly merged parish should hire a business administrator;

I hereby direct the pastor of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families to determine a job description, requirements, and compensation for said business administrator; advertise the position; conduct interviews with applicants; and with the help of suitable lay members of the parish determine and hire a suitable applicant for the role.

Art. VII - Reorganization of facilities

Whereas the plan affirmed by the CAP included provisions for a combined office for the newly merged parish;

Whereas, at present, the parish campus in Mora seems the best location, in the judgment of the Pastor and those assisting him;

Whereas, however, prudence demands an openness to change in this and other matters;

Whereas there is a chapel for Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration at the Church of St. Louis Bertrand;

Whereas the unifying power of Eucharistic devotion, as noted above, is increasingly central to the life of the Faithful in the ACC;

Whereas the intent of the donor of the chapel, the fact that the affirmed plan, as noted above, proposes that the Church of St. Louis Bertrand might cease to be used by the new parish, and the limitations and facilities on the other campuses of the newly merged parish generate the need for multiple prudential judgments with regard to the St. Anne Chapel;

Whereas there is a strict obligation to honor the intentions of donors (c. 1267 §3), if they are known, as well as an obligation to promote devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament as an important element of the life of any parish (c. 528 §2);

§1 I hereby order that the main office of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families will be located at the campus of St. Mary in Mora, without prejudice of the right of the pastor to engage in those projects of construction, retrofitting, or even relocating of the office in order to better satisfy the pastoral needs of the whole parish.

§2 I hereby direct the pastor, in consultation with appropriate persons of the newly merged parish, to consider and determine the following:

- 1° How the activity of perpetual adoration may continue in the newly merged parish;**
- 2° Where the St. Anne Chapel might be relocated, if that is even possible, considering what is known or at least speculated by some regarding the intentions of the donor;**

§3 Further, I hereby decree that if no decision is made with regard to §2, 2° by December 31, 2027, St. Anne's Chapel is to remain with the property of what was the campus of the Parish of St. Louis Bertrand, whatever the ultimate state of that campus may be.

Art. VIII - Lay collaboration in the governance of the parish

Whereas the parish is governed by the Pastor who serves as administrator of the parish's goods and represents the parish (c. 532);

Whereas the parish is to have a finance council, ordered by the norms of the Diocesan Bishop (c. 537);

Whereas this newly merged parish is a "community of communities," and an amalgamation of the church goods held in trust by four distinct communities;

Whereas it is my desire that the administration of the church goods of the newly formed parish proceed in a manner consistent with and even exceeding previous standards of trust and integrity;

Whereas I want the initial composition of the finance council of the newly merged parish to represent each of the prior communities (c. 537);

Whereas provision for the Finance Council is otherwise normally made according to Policy A1b of the Handbook of Policies and Guidelines Diocese of Saint Cloud – namely, it is appointed freely by the pastor;

§1 I hereby order that the parish finance council of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, shall initially consist of the following members, each appointed to an initial term which is to conclude after the merging of the civil corporations take place and new by-laws are amended describing the selection of finance council members – but no later than July 1, 2028: Michelle Czech, Dan Moscho, John Herzing, Sue Hackenmueller, Rose Ryan, John Gossen, Karen Renaud, and Stacy Tadych.

§2 Further, I hereby decree that the aforementioned Parish Finance Council shall be the finance council consulted in accord with Article V of the by-laws of the civil corporations of St. Louis Bertrand, St. Mary in Milaca, St. Mary in Mora, and St. Kathryn, until such time as the civil corporations of those parishes are merged.

Art. IX - Other parochial things

Whereas it is understood that it is the obligation of the pastor of a parish to organize and provide the celebrations of the sacraments in the parish which he shepherds, and thus he has the corresponding right to elect the time and location of celebrations of the sacraments within his parish (cc. 528, 530);

Whereas it is the obligation of the Diocesan Bishop to see to it that those priests of his diocese who serve the People of God as parish pastors fulfill their obligations (c. 384), especially by the exercise of all the ordinary, proper and immediate power of his pastoral office (c. 381 §1);

§1 I hereby order that, as of July 1, 2026, the weekend Mass Schedule be established as 4:00 p.m. on Saturday at the Church of St. Louis Bertrand, 8:00 a.m. Sunday at the

Church of St. Mary in Milaca, and 10:00 a.m. Sunday at the Church of St. Mary in Mora, without prejudice to the right of the pastor to revise this schedule;

§2 I hereby direct that the weekend Mass schedule be reviewed and appropriately revised by the pastor, in consultation with appropriate persons and in light of any changes to the campuses of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, by December 31, 2026.

§3 I hereby order the pastor to establish, in consultation with appropriate persons, a weekday Mass schedule that utilizes only the primary and, at his discretion, the partner church (see Art. II and III) of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, no later than July 1, 2026, without prejudice to his right to determine different arrangements, especially in response to a particular situation, such as a maintenance needs or weather, that obliges a change in one instance or another;

§4 I hereby order the pastor, having consulted the ACC Planning Council, to determine the timing, location, and composition of events (titular feasts, potlucks, fish fries, festivals) in the yearly calendar of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families by November 22, 2026.

§5 I hereby direct that the parochial registers of the former parishes be ended as of May 2, 2026, and that new registers for the newly formed parish be established as of May 3, 2026; the parochial registers of the former parishes are to be retained in the central office of the Parish of St. Joseph, Pillar of Families

Art. X - Notification and Appeals

The above merger and associated precepts and decisions, though related by reason of motivation and legal action, are nevertheless, strictly speaking, independent. Therefore, if a member of the Faithful is aggrieved by *any* article of this decree, that member may present a petition for modification or revocation of the whole decree or simply a single provision therein, within ten working days of notification of the decree, ie the petition must be received at the Chancery of the Diocese of Saint Cloud before the close of business on May 18, 2026. (see the address of the chancery in the header on the first page of this decree).

To that end, **I hereby direct that notification take place according to the following:**

§1 The Pastor is to receive a signed copy of the decree;

§2 The Pastor or his delegate is hereby directed to read the Preamble, an appropriate summary of Article I, and this article at all weekend Masses on May 2 and May 3, 2026;

§3 The Pastor or his delegate is to ensure that paper copies of this decree are provided in the churches of each parish merged by this decree;

§4 This decree is to be posted to the All Things New Website of the Diocese of Saint Cloud on May 1, 2026.

So long as notification takes place as described above, **all of the decisions, precepts, and other legal actions indicated in this decree go into effect on May 3, 2026**, according to the dates and

times indicated and without prejudice to my right to suspend or revoke the provisions of this document, in whole or in part, especially in response to a petition from a member of the Faithful.

Given at the Chancery, the 29th Day of April, the Year of Our Lord 2026

+ Patrick M. Neary, C.S.C.
+Patrick M. Neary, CSC
Bishop, Diocese of Saint Cloud

[SEAL]

Joseph C. Tavello
Ecclesiastical Notary

Prot. No. 57-26