



For Immediate Release

Diocese of Buffalo Announces Final Decisions on Parishes and Worship Sites

Comprehensive decision presented reflects collaboration among all Diocesan stakeholders

Buffalo, N.Y., September 10, 2024 – Driven by a comprehensive and collaborative planning process involving clergy and laity, the Diocese of Buffalo today has announced a reshaping of parishes and worship sites in its eight-county region that will see a total of 118 worship sites remain open following a merger/closure review.

“The Diocese of Buffalo, like dioceses across our nation and around the world, has had to deal with some harsh realities - a decline in Church attendance, the decline of those pursuing a life in ordained ministry, the rise of secularism and shift away from the parish as the defining center of Catholic identity and the horrendous toll that the sexual abuse scandal by clergy and others has inflicted on parish life and the personal faith of so many; most especially on those who have been forever harmed in body, mind and spirit,” explained Bishop Michael W. Fisher.

“Yet from the beginning, this process, known as the Road to Renewal, has been about reinvigorating Catholic faith, more fully optimizing parish and diocesan resources, and increasing the impact of our varied ministries among the countless who benefit from them across Western New York. The ultimate goal is for all parish families to be and remain vibrant communities of faith, focused on their evangelizing mission, and serving the abundant need all around us,” added Bishop Fisher.

The Diocese currently has a total of 196 worship sites that include 160 parishes and 36 secondary worship sites. Going forward the Diocese will see 79 parishes and 39 secondary worship sites remain after the merger/closure process.

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Diocese of Buffalo

Office of Communications



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In the meetings with the Vicarates held August 12th through 22nd, 52 counter proposals were presented from 30 Families of Parishes to a diocesan review team which resulted in changes to 26 of the 36 Families of Parishes' initial recommendations proposed in June, while six of the Families of Parishes accepted the initial recommendations.

Highlights of some of those 26 changes in the initial June recommendations include:

- In Family #20 in North Buffalo, the initial recommendation was proposed to have two parishes - Assumption Parish and St. Margaret Parish. In the final decision, Assumption Parish and St. Mark Parish will remain open, with St. Margaret to be used as a secondary worship site.
- In Family #12 in Batavia, the initial recommendation was proposed to keep open both Resurrection and Ascension Parishes. Following the counter proposal meeting, the final decision changed to merge Ascension Parish with Resurrection Parish, and have St. Maximillian Kolbe Parish in Family #13 join Family #12, and serve as a secondary worship site.
- In Family #3 in the Dunkirk/Fredonia area, the initial recommendation was to have Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Silver Creek and Holy Trinity, Dunkirk, as the remaining parishes serving the area. In the final decision, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Holy Trinity will remain, but St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Dunkirk, will be included as a secondary worship site.

“We received many excellent, well-researched and well-presented counter proposals,” explained Rev. Bryan Zielenieski, Vicar for Renewal and Development, who leads the Road to Renewal effort. “Based on the information presented in those meetings last month, the diocesan review team changed the initial recommendations in 26 of the 36 Families of Parishes. This high level of change from the initial recommendations reveals the true openness and collaboration in our effort to craft a Diocesan roadmap for the foreseeable future.”

Accompanying the news release are summary sheets that detail by vicariate the parishes and secondary worship sites remaining open, and the parishes/worship sites scheduled for merging and closing.

The Families of Parishes will now work to decide the timeline for mergers/closures within their respective families. That work is expected to begin soon with the merger/closure process to be concluded by Pentecost in June 2025.