

DECREE
OF THE MERGER OF
SAINT LOUIS PARISH,
OWENSVILLE, OHIO,
SAINT ANN PARISH,
WILLIAMSBURG, OHIO,
HOLY TRINITY PARISH,
BATAVIA, OHIO,
AND
SAINT PHILOMENA PARISH,
STONELICK, OHIO
INTO THE NEW
HOLY FAMILY PARISH

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Louis Parish was founded in 1856; the present church building was completed in 1921. Saint Ann Parish was founded in 1947, and its present church building was completed in 1959. Holy Trinity Parish was founded in 1906; the present church was completed in 1910. Saint Philomena Parish was founded in 1839, its current church building being completed in 1905. Since 2012 these four parishes in Clermont County, Ohio, have been served by a common pastor. Over the years modifications have been made to the administrative structure of the four parishes such that they are now served by a shared central office; administrative and ministerial employees serve all four parishes. Since 2022 a single pastoral council composed of members from each parish has been serving the parishioners of all four parishes. Each parish currently has an individual finance council; however, the finance councils have been collaborating to strive to best meet the needs of all the parishes together. Many discussions have taken place between the pastor, lay staff serving the parishes, volunteer leaders, the parishioners, and the appropriate archdiocesan offices regarding the best way to meet the needs of the faithful and evangelize in accordance with the mandate of the Lord Jesus.

The pastor of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena Parishes with the recommendation of the members of the pastoral council and finance council of all four parishes, has proposed an extinctive union in which Saint Louis Parish, Saint Ann Parish, Holy Trinity Parish, and Saint Philomena Parish are merged together into a single new parish – Holy Family Parish. The pastor and people of these parishes see this arrangement as a fitting means to both best meet the pastoral needs of the

faithful and most effectively manage the resources at their disposal. Having sought consultation regarding this proposal from the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on September 8, 2025, I have determined that the pastoral mission of the Catholic Church in this portion of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati would best be served through such a merger of Saint Louis Parish, Saint Ann Parish, Holy Trinity Parish, and Saint Philomena Parish into the new Holy Family Parish.

The following factors contribute to the just cause which motivates this decision:

- 1) for over a decade sacramental practice and parishioner population has declined in the four parishes;
- 2) there are an insufficient number of priests who are capable of being pastors in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati; this merger allows for one pastor to have the care of one parish (cf. canon 526 §1), in this region of the archdiocese;
- 3) the parishioners of these four parishes have worked effectively for over a decade to establish a high level of ministerial and social collaboration and have begun to use resources more effectively between them;
- 4) the administrative burdens on clergy and staff members would be reduced by such a unification;
- 5) the maintenance and functioning of the buildings and grounds of the four campuses can be better provided for when the entities have been canonically united as one parish;
- 6) this merger into one new parish will foster stability in the local Catholic Church by putting into place a parish configuration which can remain secure into the future;
- 7) this proposal would provide the opportunity for enhanced collaborative ministry and better utilization of clergy and lay personnel and allow for greater emphasis to be placed on evangelization and the practice of Gospel charity.

Taking into account the supreme law of the Church, i.e. the salvation of souls (cf. canon 1752), it is my belief that such a merger into a single new parish will better serve the Church's mission to evangelize and allow for more efficient administration of the temporal goods of the faithful.

Therefore, in virtue of my office as diocesan bishop, in accordance with canon 515 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby decree the extinctive union by merger of Saint Louis Parish (Owensville), Saint Ann Parish (Williamsburg), Holy Trinity Parish (Batavia), and Saint Philomena Parish (Stonelick), canonically erecting the new parish under the title of Holy Family Parish.

The intentions of the founders and donors regarding the temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to the former parishes of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena must be respected. Furthermore, the patrimonial goods, rights, and assets, including *bona sacra* and religious articles, as well as the obligations and liabilities of the former parishes of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena shall belong to Holy Family Parish, according to the norm of law (canon 121). The pastor of Holy Family Parish will be responsible for the administration of all the temporal goods, in accordance with the universal law of the Church and the particular law of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The territory of Holy Family Parish shall include the territory of the former parishes of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena. The new boundaries of Holy Family Parish shall be:

On the north: east from the intersection of Wolfpen Pleasant Hill Road and State Route 131, along State Route 131, to the intersection with State Route 132; north along State Route 132 to Cedarville Road; northeast along Cedarville Road to the intersection with State Route 727; northeast along State Route 727 to the intersection with State Route 133; then,

On the east: south on State Route 133 to the intersection with Marathon-Edenton Road; south along Marathon-Edenton Road, to the intersection with US Route 50 in Marathon; west along US Route 50 to the intersection with State Route 286; southeast along State Route 286 to the Clermont County/Brown County line; south along the Clermont County/Brown County line to the intersection of New Harmony Shiloh Road and Bootjack Corner Road; then,

On the south: west on Bootjack Corner Road to the intersection with Musgrove Road; south on Musgrove Road to the intersection with Hennings Mill Road; west on Hennings Mill Road which becomes Township Hennings Mill Road; following west on Township Hennings Mill Road through the intersection with State Route 133 at which point the road continues as Concord Hennings Mill Road; following west on Concord Hennings Mill Road to the intersection with Bethel Concord Road; then by airline southwest across Todds Run and through East Fork State Park to the Elklick Road; north on an airline across William H. Harsha Lake to the end of Afton-Elklick Road; southwest on an airline to the intersection of Slade Road and State Route 222; north and then west along State Route 222 to the intersection with Mount Holly Road; west along Mount Holly Road until the intersection with Chapel Road; west along Chapel Road to the intersection with State Route 132; then north along State Route 132 to the intersection with Judd Road; west along Judd Road to the intersection with Amelia-Olive Branch Road; then

On the west: north along Amelia-Olive Branch Road to the intersection with Clough Pike; then west along Clough Pike to the intersection with McMann Road; continuing northwest on Clough Pike to the intersection with Glen Este-Withamsville Road; then northeast on Glen Este-Withamsville Road to State Route 32; then east along State Route 32 to Olive Branch-Stonelick Road; north on Olive Branch-Stonelick Road to the intersection with Binning Road; northwest on Binning Road until it dead ends into Round Bottom Road; northeast on Round Bottom Road to the intersection with US Route 50; west on US Route 50 to Wolfpen Pleasant Road; continuing north on Wolfpen Pleasant Road to the point of the beginning at the intersection with State Route 131.

I further decree that Saint Louis Church will be the parochial church of Holy Family Parish. Saint Ann Church, Holy Trinity Church, and Saint Philomena Church will all continue to function as subsidiary churches.


The sacramental records of the former parishes of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena shall be closed and remain in the care and custody of Holy Family Parish to be properly preserved and safeguarded. A new set of sacramental records is to be established for Holy Family Parish. Any sacraments which take place at Saint Louis Church, Saint Ann Church, Holy Trinity Church, and Saint Philomena Church are to be recorded in the sacramental registers of Holy Family Parish.

The parishioners of the former parishes of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena are to be commended for their collaboration and mutual encouragement in the faith as exhibited over the recent years. They are to associate themselves with their new proper territorial parish, Holy Family Parish, or another parish of their choice in accordance with universal and archdiocesan law.

The rich history and legacy of the former parishes of Saint Louis, Saint Ann, Holy Trinity, and Saint Philomena are to be held in high esteem and rightly honored. Furthermore, the people of Holy Family Parish, under the leadership of their pastor, are to strive diligently, with God's help, to form a unified, harmonious congregation dedicated to fulfilling the mission that Jesus Christ committed to his disciples.


This decree becomes effective on January 1, 2026, and is to be published immediately such that all members of Saint Louis Parish, Saint Ann Parish, Holy Trinity Parish, and Saint Philomena Parish will be properly notified. Recourse may be made against this decree in accord with the norms of canon law.

Given from the Chancery of the Archdiocese,
Cincinnati, Ohio,
on the 7th day of November in the Year of Our Lord 2025.



Most Reverend Robert G. Casey
Archbishop of Cincinnati

SEAL



Reverend Jason A. Williams, J.C.L.
Chancellor