

MOST REVEREND DOUGLAS J. LUCIA
BISHOP OF SYRACUSE

DECREE
ON THE EXTINCTIVE UNION – MERGER OF THE
PARISHES OF SAINT PETER (UTICA) AND SAINT MARK (UTICA)

Whereas the parish of Saint Peter was established in 1872 and its current church was dedicated in 1969 and the parish of Saint Mark was established in 1963 and its church was dedicated in 1964;

Whereas the parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark were “linked,” (served by one pastor (c. 526 §1)) 1 July 2023;

Whereas an examination of the condition of the parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark took place throughout 2024 and 2025, evaluating the sacramental statistics, Mass attendance, finances, vitality of each parish, options for pastoral care, etc., involving the pastors, trustees, finance councils, pastoral councils, and parishioners from each parish as well as diocesan officials, resulting in a unanimous recommendation to merge into one parish in order to provide for the pastoral care of the faithful and to better promote their active engagement in the Church’s mission of worship, evangelization, and care of those in need, the results of which were made known at parish listening sessions as well as through parish bulletins, announcements at the end of Mass, etc.;

Whereas, I convoked the Presbyteral Council on 13 March 2025 and presided over it according to the norm of law (cans. 127 §1, 166 §1, and 500 §1), placing the proposed modifications of the parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark on the agenda ahead of time, ensuring that a summary of the status of each individual parish was provided to the members of the Council (can. 50), proposing the merger of each individual parish, seeking the informed and free counsel of the members concerning the proposed modification of each individual parish (can. 515 §2), listening to arguments both for and against the proposed modification of each individual parish, and receiving unanimous support for the proposed modification of each individual parish;

Whereas "It is only for the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or alter parishes. He is neither to erect, suppress, nor alter notably parishes, unless he has heard the presbyteral council" (can. 515 §2);

Whereas the parish of Saint Peter has experienced a significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance and in the celebration of the sacraments, operates at a yearly financial deficit, and has limited resources;

Whereas the parish of Saint Mark has experienced a significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance and in the celebration of the sacraments, operates at a yearly financial deficit, and has limited resources;

Whereas the population of Utica has decreased such that there is no longer a need for the current number of individual parishes, the number of priests available in the Diocese of Syracuse to provide pastoral care has decreased while the average age of those available to serve has increased, the financial resources of each parish are directed primarily to the maintenance of buildings and physical plants as well as to provide for adequate personnel, and that various other options concerning the pastoral care of some of these parishes have been attempted and exhausted;

Therefore, in order to promote the good of souls as well as the good of the diocese, I the undersigned Bishop of Syracuse, have decided as follows:

DECREE

1. The parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark located in Utica, New York are united via an extinctive union-merger to form the new parish of the Holy Cross.
2. The members of the originating parishes will now become members of the new parish. The territories of the parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark will be included in the territory of the new parish.
3. Given its ministerial import, the principal church of the parish will be the church of Saint Mark located at 440 Keyes Road, Utica, New York.
4. The auxiliary church of the parish will be Saint Peter. It will remain open. At present, faithful will continue to have the right of entry to this church for public worship. Also, at present, the Most Holy Eucharist will be reserved at this church (can. 934 §1, 1°).
5. The regular schedule of Masses and the celebration of the sacraments will be determined by the pastor.

6. All sacramental registers hitherto preserved by each parish are to be conveyed to the office of the newly merged parish located at the church of Saint Mark, where they are to be faithfully preserved according to the norms of can. 535 §§ 1-5.

7. The temporal goods as well as any patrimonial rights and obligations of the parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark will be assumed by the new parish. The intentions of the founders and donors as well as any acquired rights are to be respected (can. 121).


This merger is effective immediately.

This decree hereby revokes and replaces any decrees issued by my predecessor, the Most Reverend Robert J. Cunningham, concerning the parishes of Saint Peter and Saint Mark.

I further order this decree to be made public to all the faithful through its publication on this day, 12 July 2025. This publication on the diocesan website (www.syrdio.org), on the website of the local diocesan newspaper (thecatholicsun.com), on the website of the parish of Saint Mark, and in the bulletin of the parish of Saint Mark will be the legitimate notification. A notarized copy of the decree will be sent to the pastor.

This decree may be challenged by anyone who feels aggrieved by it within the peremptory time limit of ten days from the legitimate notification of the decree, that is, on 12 July 2025, by seeking its revocation or emendation directly from me (can. 1734 §2).

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Syracuse on this tenth day of July in the year of our Lord, two-thousand twenty-five.


Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse


Reverend Christopher R. Seibt
Vice Chancellor