

MOST REVEREND DOUGLAS J. LUCIA
BISHOP OF SYRACUSE

DECREE
ON THE EXTINCTIVE UNION – MERGER OF THE
PARISHES OF SAINT PETER (ROME), SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST (ROME), SAINT
JOSEPH (LEE CENTER), AND SAINT PAUL (ROME)

Whereas the parish of Saint Peter was established in 1837 and its current church was dedicated in 1897, the parish of Saint John the Baptist was established in 1909 and its current church was dedicated in 1954, the parish of Saint Joseph was founded as a mission of Saint Patrick, Taberg in 1923, its current church was dedicated in 1953, and it was established as a parish in 1962, and the parish of Saint Paul was established in 1954 and its church was dedicated in 1958;

Whereas other parishes were merged or “linked,” (served by one pastor (c. 526 §1)) for a time with these parishes: (1) the parish of Saint Mary (Rome), established in 1848, was merged with the parish of Saint Peter in 2009 and its current church, dedicated in 1872, was relegated and alienated, (2) the parish of the Transfiguration (Rome), established in 1909, was merged with the parish of Saint John the Baptist 6 May 2025 and its current church, dedicated in 1909, was relegated and is in the process of being alienated, and (3) the parish of Saint Leo and Saint Ann (Holland Patent) was linked with the parish of Saint John the Baptist in 2023-2025;

Whereas the parishes of Rome became part of the same pastoral care area (PCA) in 1997 and the parish of Saint Joseph (Lee Center) was linked with the parish of Saint Paul (Rome) in 2014 due to changing demographics of the area, limited resources, retirement of the pastor, and geographical proximity;

Whereas an examination of the condition of each of the parishes took place throughout 2024, evaluating the sacramental statistics, Mass attendance, finances, vitality of each parish, options for pastoral care, etc., involving the pastors, trustees, finance councils, pastoral councils, committees of volunteers, 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 Town Hall meetings 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, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Joseph, and Saint Paul 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 John the Baptist 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 Joseph has experienced a significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance and in the celebration of the sacraments, operates at a significant yearly financial deficit, and has limited resources;

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

Whereas the population of Rome and of Lee Center 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, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Joseph, and Saint Paul located in Rome and Lee Center, New York are united via an extinctive union-merger to form the new parish of the Sacred Heart.
2. The members of the originating parishes will now become members of the new parish. The territories of the parishes of Saint Peter, Saint Joseph, and Saint Paul will be included in the territory of the new parish.
3. Given its historical, architectural, and liturgical significance as well as its central location and ministerial import, the principal church of the parish will be the church of Saint Peter located at 200 North James Street Rome, New York.
4. The auxiliary churches of the parish will be Saint John the Baptist, Saint Joseph, and Saint Paul. They will remain open. At present, faithful will continue to have the right of entry to these churches for public worship. Also, at present, the Most Holy Eucharist will be reserved at these churches (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 Paul (1807 Bedford Street, Rome, New York), 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, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Joseph, and Saint Paul 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).

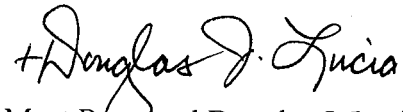
This merger will become effective on 27 June 2025, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

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

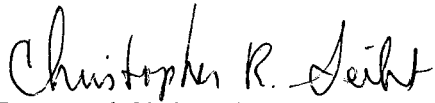
I further order this decree to be made public to all the faithful through its publication on this day, 5 June 2025. This publication on the diocesan website (www.syrдио.org), on the website of the local diocesan newspaper (thecatholicsun.com), on the parish websites, and in the parish bulletins will 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 5 June 2025, by seeking its revocation or emendation directly from me (can. 1734 §2).

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Syracuse on this fifth day of June in the year of our Lord, two-thousand twenty-five, the Memorial of Saint Boniface, Bishop and Martyr.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas J. Lucia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher R. Seibt". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Reverend Christopher R. Seibt
Vice Chancellor