



**Decree Of Canonical Parish Merger
Our Lady of Pompei Parish
Our Lady of Fatima Parish
Effective December 1, 2024**

Beginning in September of 2022, I initiated an extensive process of listening, visioning and discernment regarding the future of this parish and others in the City of Baltimore and the surrounding areas. The general public, parish leadership and individual parishioners were invited to attend a series of public meetings to advise me on the best future for these parishes. An initial proposal for reconfiguration that was prepared by 250 lay and clergy leaders was made public in March of 2024. Two public meetings were held after this announcement to receive feedback from individual parishes and individual parishioners regarding the initial proposal. All have also been given the opportunity to provide their views to me by mail, email or individually throughout the process.

In regard to the proposed merger of Our Lady of Pompei parish and Our Lady of Fatima parish, the members of Our Lady of Pompei parish made their views known about the future of their parish by completing surveys, attending prayerful discussions and participating in three visioning sessions. Meetings were also held with parish leadership from both parishes before a final decision was made. After additional changes were made based on the feedback received from that process, the final proposal was made public on May 22, 2024.

The Presbyteral Council and Archdiocesan Finance Council (BOFA) were asked for feedback on both the initial proposal in April 2024 and the final proposal in May 2024 for the above-referenced merger prior to their final canonical review of the proposed plan. In accordance with canons 50, 120 §1, 121 and the requirements of canon 515 §2, the proposal to canonically merge Our Lady of Pompei parish into Our Lady of Fatima parish was formally presented to the Presbyteral Council on September 3, 2024, for the

required canonical consultation. After reviewing and discussing the materials related to the canonical merger, the members gave their unanimous support to the proposal.

The following facts regarding Our Lady of Pompei parish constitute the reasons, in summary, for the canonical merger of Our Lady of Pompei parish into Our Lady of Fatima parish (canon 51):

- The parish has outgrown its facilities due to an increase in the Hispanic community in this area;
- There is insufficient space to expand the ministries of Our Lady of Pompei parish at the present location;
- The religious community that leads Our Lady of Fatima parish and Our Lady of Pompei parish agrees that the parishes should be merged to better and more easily manage the growth and needs of both parishes;
- The expenses of the buildings at Our Lady of Pompei parish have hampered the growth of the parish;
- Our Lady of Pompei parish has operated at a deficit for 14 of the last 20 years and its assets are not adequate to cover future deficits and investment in ministries;
- Our Lady of Pompei parish is experiencing an increase in costs of facilities, with the costs to operate facilities requiring 64% of total offertory, limiting the parish's ability to fund ministry;
- There are 9 parishes within 2 miles of Our Lady of Pompei parish;
- Our Lady of Pompei parish is 1.9 miles (3.1 kilometers) from Our Lady of Fatima parish;
- Our Lady of Fatima parish has sufficient property and assets to allow for future growth of the merged parishes; and
- Bringing the parishes together will facilitate planning for the future growth of the Hispanic community in that area.

From these facts, considered as a whole, it is my opinion that the merging of Our Lady of Pompei parish and Our Lady of Fatima parish will allow the greatest opportunity to continue and strengthen the ministries which are presently offered for the parishioners of Our Lady of Pompei parish.

Having heard all who have an interest in this matter, including the opinion of the members of the Presbyteral Council who were properly convened according to law and voted on this matter in my presence, I believe the reasons listed above in this decree establish a just cause for the canonical merger of the Our Lady of Pompei parish into Our Lady of Fatima parish. As a result, I do hereby decree that Our Lady of Pompei parish is to be canonically merged into Our Lady of Fatima parish, Baltimore effective, December 1, 2024.

Boundaries

The boundaries of Our Lady of Fatima parish shall reflect the current outside boundaries of the two parishes as of the date of the canonical merger.

Assets and Liabilities

Until the issuance of a subsequent decree, the temporal goods, assets, and liabilities under civil law of the civilly incorporated Our Lady of Pompei parish and the civilly incorporated Our Lady of Fatima parish, all under the canonical administration of the pastor of Our Lady of Fatima parish, shall nonetheless remain separate and distinct. Furthermore, I order the sequestration *pro tempore* of the temporal goods and assets of each civil corporation for the exclusive use of meeting the debts and liabilities of their respective civil corporations (cf. can. 1496 §1).

Status of Churches

While Our Lady of Pompei Church remains a sacred edifice to which the faithful have the right of entry under canon 1214, it now becomes a subsidiary church of Our Lady of Fatima parish with permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament there (cf. can. 934 §1, 2^o) and with the pastor being responsible for the reserved Eucharist (cf. can. 934 §2). Our Lady of Fatima Church will remain the parish church for the canonically merged parishes.

Sacramental Registers and Other Parish Records

The parish registers for Our Lady of Pompei parish are to be closed as of November 30, 2024. Any entries after that date in the registries of Our Lady of Fatima parish must indicate at which church the sacramental event took place. All closed registers shall be kept and maintained by Our Lady of Fatima parish or sent to the Archdiocesan Archives in accordance with Archdiocesan policy. The parish records (financial, etc.) of Our Lady of Pompei parish will become the property and responsibility of Our Lady of Fatima parish on December 1, 2024.

Parish Seal

All parish seals shall be the property of Our Lady of Fatima parish beginning December 1, 2024.

Effective Date and Publication of this Decree

This decree is effective December 1, 2024. Its official notification is its publication on the website of the Archdiocese of Baltimore on September 29, 2024.

I direct that the Pastor/ Administrator of Our Lady of Pompei parish and Our Lady of Fatima parish to announce at all Masses on the weekend of September 28-29, 2024, that this Decree has been published on the website of the Archdiocese of Baltimore (archbalt.org). I ask all the faithful of the new parish to work together to build a

thriving, evangelizing community centered on the Eucharist and reflective of their rich histories in the years ahead.

Any member of Our Lady of Pompei parish who claims to have been aggrieved by this Decree has the right to seek its revocation or emendation (canon 1734). This request must be made in writing to the Most Reverend Archbishop of Baltimore, Catholic Center, 320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, and postmarked no later than October 11, 2024.

Given at the Curia of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in Baltimore City on this 25th day of September, in the Year of Our Lord, 2024.

+William E. Lori

Most Reverend William E. Lori, S.T.D.
Archbishop of Baltimore

Diane L. Barr

Dr. Diane L. Barr, JD, JCD, PhD
Chancellor

