



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 28, 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

Two years ago, we as an Archdiocese embarked upon a prayerful and extensive journey of *Seek the City to Come* to reimagine our Catholic Church in Baltimore City and in some surrounding areas. It was during this time that we visited parishes, worked with leadership, held open listening sessions, shared stories, and prayed together to gain a more accurate understanding of the present-day Church in Baltimore City. We spent those years envisioning a fully alive and evangelizing Church and in May, I released the final *Seek the City* plan.

I know this is not an easy time for our faithful parishioners, especially those who are facing the eventual closing of their beloved church buildings. I appreciate the input you have offered, the love you have for your community, and I recognize that this is not an easy journey.

After consulting with the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council and releasing the comprehensive plan in May, I am now issuing the official decree regarding St. Francis of Assisi Church. This is a step required by Canon Law.

This parish will be merged into St. Matthew Church on December 1, 2024. The reasons behind my decision will be outlined in the decree that is specific to your parish. The decree will be made available to view on Sunday evening, September 29 at www.archbalt.org. Please expect the decree to be published after 8:00 p.m. Any parishioner of the Archdiocese has the right to ask me to change or revoke my decision through an official appeal. This request must be made in writing and postmarked no later than October 11, 2024, and sent to me. Appeals may also be printed out and hand-delivered to the Catholic Center (320 Cathedral Street, 2021) by 5:00 p.m. on October 11, 2024.

I ask you to join me in praying for your parish community. Please continue to work with your pastor, his staff, the parish transition team, and Catholic Center personnel as we move forward in implementing the Eucharistic Vision we discerned together. May the Holy Spirit guide us as we move forward to build parishes centered on Christ and fully alive with the Gospel.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore