

May 17, 2015

Dear parishioner,

Over the past few years, we have all been watching, with growing interest, the unfolding of the ***Making All Things New*** initiative here in the Archdiocese of New York. As we have so often been reminded, **MATN** is not simply about the merging of parishes. It is about ensuring that our parishes, our faith communities throughout the Archdiocese, are as strong, active and vibrant as they can possibly be. Now, and into the future, the expansion of our existing parishes and the establishment of brand new parishes will remain an essential part of our Archdiocesan-wide parish planning.

Last week, our Archbishop, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, met with a group of his pastors and administrators. After much prayer and deliberation, he announced his final decision regarding recommendations concerning some twenty-eight additional parishes throughout the Archdiocese of New York. He then sent out a mailing to all of the registered parishioners of each of the affected parishes.

You may recall that, back in November of 2014, His Eminence revealed a list of fifty-five newly merged parishes. In this past week's announcement, the Cardinal announced thirteen additional parish mergers, including the merger of Saint Ann, Nyack with Saint Paul, Congers. The merger will take effect on August 1, 2015. Saint Paul has been designated as the parish church and the parish clergy will reside in Congers. The church of Saint Ann will continue to serve as an active worship site with masses and sacraments being celebrated at that location. Specifics will be worked out by the two current pastors. It is important to note that the archdiocese will be in "planning mode" for the foreseeable future. Even the present arrangement of Making All Things New is to be re-evaluated after two years.

Long time parishioners of Saint Paul may recall that this marks the third time that another parish has been joined with St. Paul. Previously, the churches of St. Michael's, Rockland Lake and St. Theresa, Valley Cottage, were closed and their faith communities merged with Saint Paul's back in 1963. The statues of these two saints are prominently displayed on the rear wall of Saint Paul church directly over the votive candle racks. They are a part of our heritage. This time, however, a neighboring faith community is not being closed. Instead, it is being *merged* with St. Paul in order to form a brand new parish.

You may ask what are some of the immediate implications of this merger? As of August 1, 2015, the two currently independent *canonical* entities or parishes will be *dissolved* and the newly merged parish of **Saint Paul – Saint Ann** will be born. By canon law, when two separate, independent, parishes are merged into ONE, they cease to exist as parishes. It, therefore, follows that the canonical assignments of the current pastors will also cease to exist. In accordance with longstanding personnel policy, all priests of the Archdiocese will be invited to apply for an assignment as pastors of the newly merged parishes.

It is expected that it may take up to an additional year for these new *canonical* entities/parishes to also achieve recognition as a new *legal* entity/corporation. Until the incorporation is completed, the new

canonical parish will be governed under the direction of the newly appointed pastor by the civil corporations of the two former parishes, which continue to exist as *civil* corporations even though they are no longer *canonical* entities. For that reason, during the upcoming 2015 -2016 fiscal year, the newly merged parish of **Saint Paul – Saint Ann** maintain separate financial records for both sites. If all goes according to plan, as of September 1, 2016, the new parish will be both *canonically* and *legally* ONE and will conduct all business/financial activities as one corporation with one operating budget.

The new parish of **Saint Paul – Saint Ann** will be a member of Rockland County Cluster #56 which includes Saint Anthony’s (Nanuet), St. Augustine’s (New City) and Saint Francis of Assisi (West Nyack). The strategic plan of this cluster calls for the pastors and representative parishioners from each parish to meet on a regular basis in order to collaborate with each other to achieve common goals established under the MATN initiative.

As we anticipate the implementation stage of this development, let us pray for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit in all of our deliberations. Let us also incorporate, into our own daily prayers, the **Making All Things New** prayer which has so often been prayed throughout this lengthy process. Saint Paul and Saint Ann, pray for us.

Prayerfully in Christ,

Rev. Monsignor Emmet R. Nevin
Pastor

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MAKING ALL THINGS NEW PRAYER

God our Father, through the Gospel and the Eucharist, You bring us together as Your Church in the Archdiocese of New York

Send us your Holy Spirit, to enlighten our minds and guide our actions as we plan for the future of parish life in this Archdiocese.

Help us learn new ways to strengthen and revitalize our parish communities, and to be good stewards of the spiritual and material gifts that sustain them.

Bless our work, so that our parishes may continue to witness to the truth of the Gospel, and be a sign of Your love for all people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen