



Diocese of Worcester
Office of the Bishop
49 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

February 13, 2010

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In today's Gospel reading from St. Luke, Jesus addressed a crowd of people with words which must have been as startling to their ears as they are to ours. In the Beatitudes Jesus said that the hungry are blessed and predicted woe to those who are filled now. In other words, Jesus taught then and now that we should not give up hope when in need or be content with the things of this world. What matters is to keep our eyes focused on Jesus who is our way, our truth, and our life.

Does his teaching apply to parish life? As Catholics we learn about and witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ most especially in our parishes. It is in a vibrant parish that we hope to experience God's love in sacramental life, to share God's love in community and to pass on the faith which is our most treasured gift. In short, we cannot rest on past laurels or simply be comfortable in our parishes. Our parishes must be beacons shedding the light of Jesus Christ and his message of salvation through out our neighborhoods and communities both today and in the future.

As Bishop of the Diocese of Worcester, I have been grateful that our diocese has been involved in pastoral planning for more than five years to stimulate our parish life towards these noble ends. On the recommendation of the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee, I announced nearly two years ago that St. Charles Borromeo Parish would close in June of 2010 and asked the parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo to visit neighboring parishes to discern what possible merger would most benefit them. Following their own process, no specific conclusion was reached. As a result, I have made the determination in consultation with the Diocesan Planning Committee that it would be best to merge St. Charles Borromeo Parish with Blessed Sacrament Parish from which it was originally divided in 1954. As of July 1, 2010, Father Chester Misiewicz will be the new pastor of the merged parish, and Msgr. Stephen Pedone will continue to serve the Diocese in his role as Judicial Vicar while residing in another parish.

I realize that the announcement of a parish merger can be painful, as news of any major change can be difficult to hear. Yet I remain convinced that merging these two parishes will allow each to benefit from the other's strengths and provide for a much stronger parish in that part of the City of Worcester with appropriate staffing and space for liturgical, educational, and social life.

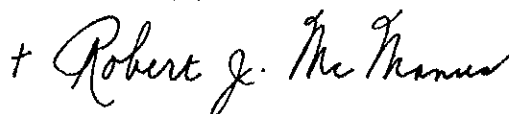
It is important that the contributions and dedication of St. Charles Borromeo parishioners over these 60 years not be forgotten. I believe that the present and future pastoral needs of the Catholic community justify such a transition to address the pastoral realities of the future while not forgetting the significant accomplishments of the past. To that end, I have asked that the transition period be focused on not only merging the two parishes but also finding a way to cherish the patrimony of St. Charles Borromeo Parish for generations to come.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Father Misiewicz and Monsignor Pedone and the staffs of both parishes for the dedicated service they have offered their parishes. It is our fervent hope that this pastoral transition can be eased with this announcement.

My prayer for you the parishioners of Blessed Sacrament and St. Charles Borromeo Parishes is based on the Responsorial Psalm from today's Mass: May this new parish be like the tree planted near running water, that yields its fruit in due season and whose leaves never fade. Whatever it does will prosper, for blessed are they who hope in the Lord. May the Holy Spirit grant you the grace to be filled with hope in the Lord as you look to the future.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ 

Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, S.T.D.
Bishop of Worcester