



March 2, 2024

Dear Parishioners of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Patrick, Sacred Heart, St. Jude, and St. Joseph (Rockdale),

Blessings and peace to you!

After a yearlong process, on January 25th, my decision to merge your parishes was published, and I know these past five weeks have been very challenging for you. There have been a wide variety of opinions, emotions, and reactions expressed over the decision to close the existing parishes and form a new parish.

During this time, you have been anticipating the naming of the pastor of your new parish. After consultation with the Priest Personnel Board and prayerful reflection and discernment, I am pleased to announce that Fr. Michael Lane and Fr. J. Rodolphe Arty will be officially appointed on July 1, 2024, to serve your new parish *in solidum*. This is a Latin term which means that Father Lane will serve as the moderator, and together, they will jointly and simultaneously be responsible for the pastoral care and leadership of the new parish.

I am confident in the abilities of Fr. Lane and Fr. Arty, collaborating with the Holy Spirit, to bring your parish communities together in a spirit of unity and hope. I am grateful that they both want to lead and guide your new parish to a strong and vibrant future. They also both desire to serve the Hispanic and African-American communities and are committed to establishing a weekly Sunday Mass in the style and traditions of the Sacred Heart community.

Additionally, leadership and staff of the new school on the campus of the new parish will be determined in the coming months by the new parish leadership and the Catholic Schools Office.

The Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter will continue to minister at the newly formed mission, St. Joseph in Rockdale, under the leadership of Father Michael Magiera.

I will continue to pray for healing, peace, and unity for you and your community, and I ask you to pray for one another as well. While grieving our losses, we also look forward to creating a vibrant new parish community that will grow in faith and fellowship as members of the Body of Christ.

May God bless you today and always.

As I remain –

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Ronald A. Hicks".

Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks
Bishop of the Diocese in Joliet