

## Explanation of the Decree of Unification

Dear parishioners,

In this weekend's bulletin, you will see a decree signed by Cardinal Cupich. A decree is a pronouncement or document that formalizes a decision within the Church. In this case, the decree included here concerns the decision for our parishes to unify as a new parish after our grouping's Renew My Church discernment.

The decree states that St. Mark, Holy Rosary, and St. Helen will form a new parish on July 1, 2021. The decree states the new parish will have an *ad interim* name. This means that the parish will be called Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish until we propose a new name to Cardinal Cupich for his consideration and approval.

When you read the decree, you will notice the decree states St. Helen Church will be the parish church of the new parish and that the churches of St. Mark Parish, Holy Rosary Parish, and St. Helen Parish will be churches of the new parish. A couple of notes on this:

One implication of St. Helen Church being designated the parish church means that the sacramental records of the new parish, as well as the past sacramental records of each of St. Mark, Holy Rosary, and St. Helen will be maintained at the offices on the St. Helen campus in the future. For the current time, each parish's records will remain at their current locations, and we will update everyone when the records are fully brought together at the office on the St. Helen campus.

Second, the decree states that each of the churches of St. Mark Parish, Holy Rosary Parish, and St. Helen Parish will be churches of the new parish. When a new parish is formed, all of the assets of each former parish become part of the new parish. This includes the churches. As shared at the announcement on January 23, St. Helen will be the main worship site for the new parish, parish leadership will be asked to review the best use of Holy Rosary, which may or may not include a regular schedule of Masses, and the regular schedule of Masses at St. Mark will draw to a close (the specific timeline to be determined in the coming months). Until the procedure for formally closing a church occurs, a church remains available to use for occasional worship even if regular daily or Sunday Masses are not scheduled at the church.

Regarding the name of the new parish, there will be a process to include everyone. We will keep you updated on the timeline of when this process to consider a parish name will begin.

Until then, let us hold fast to the Lord's promise that He is with us always, and trust in the fact that He is at work in a special way within our faith community and is creating something new for all of us.

Certainly, the process of renewal is an emotional one. For many of us, it is a time of significant change. So, let us also keep each other and our neighbors in prayer as we continue our journey forward.