ARCHDIOCESE *of*
MILWAUKEE

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Miseratione Divina et Apostolicae Sedis Gratia
Archiepiscopus Milvaukiensis

DECREE OF CANONICAL MERGER

Merging **Saint Therese Parish**, 9525 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
into
Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, 201 N. 76th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
In a union by absorption.

WHEREAS:

The Directory *Apostolorum successores*, (AS) 214 states: "the diocesan bishop should be concerned to organize the arrangement of parishes in ways adapted to the care of souls, according to an inclusive and organic vision with wide pastoral outreach," and "if the good of the faithful so requires, the Bishop should proceed, after consulting the diocesan presbyteral council, to alter territorial boundaries, to divide parishes that are too large, to merge small parishes, to establish new parishes or non-territorial centers for pastoral service in the community, or even to reorganize completely the arrangement of parishes within a particular city," and,

Apostolorum successores also states (211): "specific attention should be given to the following aspects, all of which form part of the model of parish life, thereby increasing pastoral effectiveness: priestly collaboration, participation of the faithful (clerics, religious, laity), parish associations, and centers of formation," and,

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The entire territory of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee suffers from a decrease in the number of ordained priests available to serve in parochial ministry, as well as a decrease in the number of trained lay staff and volunteers to support the ministerial and administrative needs of all of our parishes, and,

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee as a whole, and the area of the City of Milwaukee most acutely, has experienced a decline in the numbers of observant Catholics who attend Mass, frequent the sacraments, and contribute to the temporal needs of parishes, and,

The parishes of Saint Therese and Saint Vincent Pallotti have attempted to maintain their respective parochial ministries during these declines in resources by sharing a common parochial administrator, sharing paid staff, sharing volunteers, sharing formation and community apostolates for several years, and,

Saint Therese Parish lacks sufficient financial resources, in consideration of long-term facilities and ministry needs, to continue indefinitely as a parish community, and Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish anticipates ongoing challenges to fund its needs, and,

The two parishes enjoy a favorable, close geographic proximity and common neighborhood in the western side of the City of Milwaukee and the southern edge of the City of Wauwatosa, and,

For 18 months, the shared parochial administrator of the two parishes has actively discerned, in consultation with the leadership of both parishes, the possible benefits of combining the two parishes as a means to enhance the parochial outreach and mission for the neighborhood, and has also discerned with the leadership of both parishes that the most effective manner of combination would be for Saint Therese Parish to be absorbed into Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, most especially because doing so would be least disruptive to the ministry of Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish School, and,

The Very Reverend Nathan Reesman, Vicar for Parish Planning, on behalf of the undersigned Archbishop of Milwaukee, met three times in the past year with the shared parochial administrator, parish leaders, and large groups of the members of both parishes to hear their opinions about the advisability of a merger of the two parishes, with the response being broadly favorable on each occasion, and,

On October 11, 2026, in the name of the leaders and faithful of both parishes, including their parish parochial and finance councils, and legal officers, the shared parochial administrator, the Reverend Thomas Pulikkeel-Chacko, SAC, in the form of a written letter, petitioned the undersigned Archbishop to alter the Parishes of Saint Therese and Saint Vincent Pallotti in the form of a merger by absorption, and,

On October 19, 2026, I, Jeffrey S. Grob, in seeking to exercise my authority as the diocesan bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to erect, suppress, or alter parishes within my jurisdiction, sought the advice of the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee concerning the decision to merge

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(canon 515 §§1, 2) Saint Therese Parish into Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, so that Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish will absorb Saint Therese Parish into itself (an extinctive union by absorption), and during the consultation the Presbyteral Council expressed unanimous support for the decision, and,

CONSIDERING THE REQUIRED JUST CAUSE FOR MERGING THESE TWO PARISHES, NAMELY:

The good of souls:

Each parish has experienced steady declines in baptisms, marriages, Mass attendance, and overall membership. In the face of declines in the Catholic faithful of each, separate parish community, and the diminishing financial resources available to each separate parish community, a merger of these two parishes by absorption allows for optimal sharing of the resources of the Catholic faithful in this area of the Cities of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa that can be directed towards reverent worship, evangelization, faith formation, successfully maintaining a Catholic Parochial School, attending to the poor, and ministering to the sick, especially in the large neighborhood hospitals of Froedtert and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin;

Limited resources:

A merger of these two parishes by absorption allows for more effective allocation of clergy, finances, fixed assets, paid staff, and volunteers without the daily inefficiencies resulting from required civil, legal, corporate separation; the merger allows for the combining of resources to confront short and long-term facilities repair needs at multiple worship and formation sites, and allows for careful future decision making about the viability of all properties of the newly-combined parish family;

Geographic proximity:

A merger of these two parishes by absorption maximizes the benefits of a shared neighborhood, and shared Catholic history, along the Bluemound Road corridor west of the Downtown City of Milwaukee and the southern area of the City of Wauwatosa;

The good of the Archdiocese:

A merger of these two parishes by absorption allows for the more effective allocation of priests serving in the Archdiocese in a time of decline in the number of available clergy, a shortage of priests fulfilling all the requisites of canon 521 to be appointed pastor, and of the observant Catholic faithful population, and allows for the pastor to have the parochial care of a single parish (c. 526 §1);

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NOTING THE INSUFFICIENCY OF LESS EXTREME FORMS OF COLLABORATION:

The parochial administrator, together with the leadership of both parishes, and in consultation with the Curial offices, have prayerfully discerned that to effectively evangelize and accomplish the care of souls, it is no longer advisable to share resources while at the same time being constrained by the limits of maintaining separate canonical and legal persons as distinct parishes. The parochial administrator has already consolidated the administrative structures and operations (utilizing Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish as the administrative seat for the employees of both parishes) to the maximum legal limits allowed without a change to their canonical and legal persons as separate parishes. The parochial administrator has already joined the leadership of both parishes into one, shared parish pastoral council;

NOTING THAT POTENTIALLY INJURED PARTIES HAVE BEEN HEARD:

In accordance with canons 50 and 51, multiple in-person consultations about the decision to merge were conducted with the shared parochial administrator, combined parish pastoral council, finance councils, leadership of the parishes, and large-group public meetings of the parishes by members of the Curial offices, including the Vicar for Parish Planning, on my behalf, and, noting especially that the shared parochial administrator, in the name of the leadership and faithful, requested this decision to merge after careful and prayerful discernment;

Having heard the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (c. 515 §2), favorably, on October 19, 2026, the undersigned Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

DECREES

1. That Saint Therese Parish, 9525 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI, and, Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, 201 N. 76th Street, Milwaukee, WI, are hereby joined in an extinctive union by absorption (cf. canon 121) of Saint Therese Parish into Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, such that the altered, continuing juridic person will continue to be known as Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, and,

2. That all the goods, obligations, and patrimonial rights proper to Saint Therese Parish are hereby transferred to Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, while respecting the intention of donors and acquired rights of specific assets proper to Saint Therese Parish, in accordance with canon 121, and,

3. That the territorial boundaries of Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish are hereby altered to now incorporate, in addition to its existent territory, the territory of Saint Therese Parish, and,

4. That the patronal feast of the altered parish will continue to be that of Saint Vincent Pallotti (January 22), and,

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5. That the church consecrated under the name of Saint Anthony (201 N. 76th Street, Milwaukee) is designated as the principal parochial church of Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, while the church consecrated under the name of Saint Therese (9525 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee), and the church consecrated under the name of Holy Cross (5424 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee) will each serve as subsidiary churches of the merged parish, where divine worship may take place, and with each subsidiary church retaining their acquired rights as parochial churches, including the use of the baptismal fonts, the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, and other sacramental celebrations according to the norms of law and the discretion of the pastor, and,

6. That the office and status of the present parochial administrator, the Reverend Thomas Pulikkeel-Chacko, SAC, of the now-altered Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, are not modified with this decree, and,

7. That in accordance with canon 535, the sacramental registers of Saint Therese Parish are closed to any new entries, with all subsequent entries made in the registers of Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish, and the registries of Saint Therese Parish are to be transferred to the Archives of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to be placed in its custody, and,

8. That the unique ecclesiastical seal of Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish continues unaltered, and,

9. That the presently combined parish pastoral council of both parishes is to become a parish pastoral council only of Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish; both the parish pastoral council and the parish finance council of the now altered Saint Vincent Pallotti Parish should be constituted with members that suitably represents the legacy interests of the former Saint Therese Parish membership, and,

10. That the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is to ensure that this decree, along with other ecclesiastical documents, supporting information from the Curial offices, minutes and record of the Presbyteral Council consultations concerning this merged union by absorption, as well as relevant civil documents governing the juridic structures of the parish corporations in Wisconsin State Law are preserved in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, and,

11. That after the requisite passage of the deferred period for legal action following the issuance of a canonical decree, all necessary legal and administrative alterations to the civil structures and assets of the two parishes that follow from the canonical effects of this decree are to proceed, and,

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12. That this decree takes effect:

JANUARY 22, 2027,
The Feast of Saint Vincent Pallotti, Parish Patron,

And,

13. That the decree is to be notified on November 1, 2026, the Solemnity of All Saints, by its publication on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee website, and by posting printed copies in the parish churches of Saint Vincent Pallotti and Saint Therese, and other suitable means determined by the parochial administrator, who receives this decree as the lawful representative of the juridic person of the parishes, and,

14. That any eventual recourse against this decree can be made in accordance with canons 1734ff.

Given at the Office of the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee,
October 30, 2026.

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The Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob,
Archbishop of Milwaukee

Barbara Anne Cussack
Chancellor

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