

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter - A  
Acts 8:5-8, 14-17;  
I Peter 3:15-18;  
John 14:15-21  
Little Flower - 5/25/14

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today's reading from Acts of the Apostles once again demonstrates the adaptability of the early Church. In last Sunday's reading from Acts, the diaconate was established to provide for the daily distribution of food to the Greek widows. Just two chapters later we are told that Philip, one of the original deacons, was already preaching and working miracles in Samaria.

On Wednesday, Archbishop Tobin announced his *Connected in the Spirit* decisions for the Indianapolis deaneries. As you know, Little Flower was part of the cohort that also included Holy Spirit, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St. Bernadette. St. Bernadette Parish will merge into Our Lady of Lourdes on November 30, 2014. Holy Spirit, Little Flower, and Our Lady of Lourdes will be partnership parishes, which means that we are being asked to collaborate where possible to strengthen existing ministries and to initiate new, needed ministries that we would not be able to initiate or sustain on our own. Little Flower and Our Lady of Lourdes are not being linked. Earlier it was thought that the pastor of Little Flower might also become the pastor of St. Bernadette or Our Lady of Lourdes. This is no longer on the table. What is not yet clear is whether the priests of Holy Spirit and I will have to celebrate Masses or other sacraments at Our Lady of Lourdes.

The Archbishop has asked the Indianapolis pastors and parish life coordinators to read the following letter at all the Masses this weekend and to include the letter in next week's bulletin. The letter is dated May 21, 2014.



The Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin, C.S.S.R.  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367  
317-236-1403

May 21, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Sixteen months ago, pastoral leaders and lay representatives from the 47 parishes in the four deaneries of greater Indianapolis entered an important planning process called *Connected in the Spirit*. This process is an effort to discern where God is leading the Church in central and southern Indiana and to discuss how the Archdiocese of Indianapolis should change its structures in order to carry out its mission today and in the future. This planning process was inaugurated under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, and the parishes of the Terre Haute Deanery were the first to have participated in *Connected in the Spirit*. Last year the Batesville Deanery completed the process and the remaining five deaneries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will eventually take part.

After careful study, personal prayer and a broad consultation that included representatives from the four greater Indianapolis deaneries, the Archdiocesan Planning Commission, the Council of Priests and the Management Council of the Archdiocese, I have given my approval to a series of recommendations that originated with the group of deanery representatives. I thank everyone who took part in this planning process. I am especially grateful for the feedback that so many people in the Indianapolis deaneries gave me as I studied these recommendations.

Every parish in the four deaneries of greater Indianapolis will be affected by these decisions. I believe that this plan represents a better stewardship of our resources and will strengthen our ability to carry out the mission that Christ has entrusted to us.

Three Indianapolis parishes will be merged. Holy Trinity Parish will merge into St. Anthony Parish, Church of the Holy Cross Parish into St. Philip Neri Parish and St. Bernadette Parish into Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. The remaining parishes will be asked to share a pastor and other resources, or to partner with another parish by creating joint ministries and programs. Please note that this letter is not a decree with canonical effects. The proper decrees for merged parishes will be available for inspection and copying at the respective parish offices.

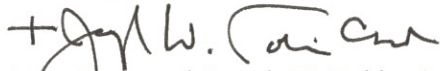
Saint Bernadette Parish will merge into Our Lady of Lourdes Parish on November 30, 2104. Holy Spirit Parish, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, and St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish will establish a partnership. Under a partnership model, the parishes will create joint programs and share staff and services.

The coming months will bring changes that touch all the faithful of the Indianapolis deaneries, as well as a particular grief for the members of the three parishes that will close. I truly regret the pain these decisions will cause. While I personally know the anguish that comes when having your home parish

closed, I am also certain that the God is constantly working through us to advance the work of His Church, leading us through sorrow to new and more abundant life.

I pray for you each day and ask that you please pray for me. May the Holy Spirit continue to fill our hearts with love and give us the wisdom and courage live out our baptismal call as disciples of our risen Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph W. Tobin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Indianapolis

As the Archbishop has noted, his decision will bring particular grief to the members of the three parishes that will close. In the next few months, we especially want to pray for the parishioners of St. Bernadette. If any of them happen to attend Mass here at Little Flower, please do your best to make them feel welcome.

Finally, I would like to end with the *Connected in the Spirit* prayer. Please bow your heads.

Eternal God,  
you are without beginning or end,  
and you sustain us every day with your Providence.

As we discern where you are guiding  
the Church in central and southern Indiana,  
grant us wisdom and strength.

Through the “Connected in the Spirit” process  
give us vibrant parish communities  
that will enable us to serve you with all our hearts.

Bring comfort, healing and hope to those who are being lead  
through a difficult transition, and unite us all  
more fully with you and with one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.