

**Real Presence/Real Future
Transition Team Update
March 2024**

As previously announced, on September 28, 2023, Bishop Fernandes issued a Decree of Suppression for St. Mark parish effective April 30, 2024. As of May 1, 2024, St. Mark will no longer be a parish and will become one with St. Mary of the Assumption parish.

The purpose of this communication is to update parishioners regarding activities and the decisions and changes made due to the merger.

Decisions Regarding the Merger

The following information reviews the decisions and the summary of known changes occurring after April 30, 2024:

1. **Final Mass at St. Mark:** The final Mass at St. Mark is Sunday April 28, 2024 at 11:30 am with Bishop Fernandes as the celebrant. Priests who served at St. Mark, including Father Gideon, will be invited to concelebrate. A luncheon will be served after the Mass on the campus of St. Mark.
2. **Lord's Day Masses:** Beginning May 4, all Lord's Day Masses will be celebrated at St. Mary. The Vigil (Saturday) Mass time will continue to be 4:30 pm with the praying of the Rosary starting at 4 pm. Sunday Masses will be 8 am and 10:00 am. Beginning the weekend of July 6/7, Sunday Masses will be 8:30 am and 10:30 am. The Vigil (Saturday) Mass and the praying of the Rosary times are unchanged.
3. **Daily Mass Adjustments:** The last Wednesday evening confession and Mass at St. Mark is March 27. Beginning April 3, 2024, Wednesday evening confession and Mass will be at St. Mary. Confessions will be heard between 5:15 and 5:45 pm followed by Mass at 6 pm. Daily morning Mass is available at St. Mary – Monday – Thursday at 7 am and Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 9 am.
4. **New Names:** Due to the suppression of St. Mark parish, the reference to St. Mark as a parish or as the St. Mark campus can no longer be used. Given the rich tradition of St. Mark, the St. Mark campus will be known as The Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption - Emerald Campus. The main building housing the former worship space, classrooms, and Food Pantry will be known as the St. Mary of the Assumption Center for Evangelization and Faith Formation. The former worship space will be named St. Mark

Assembly Hall while the St. Raymond Room will continue to be known by that name.

The locus of sacramental and worship activities will occur primarily at the St. Mary campus and the locus of faith formation and outreach ministry primarily at the Emerald Campus. In addition, the locus of education will continue at St. Mary pre-school and grade school.

5. **Reimagined Use of the St. Mark Worship (Church) Space:** The Emerald Campus will play a pivotal role in the efforts aimed at evangelization. Future activity possibilities include enhanced outreach efforts, Bible studies and other catechetical programs, music events and concerts, social events and festivals, youth activities and recreational events, retreats, and other activities. The Emerald Campus will be the center of efforts to renew the Catholic community in Lancaster as well as reach out to those who do not know the Lord.

Architect Luke Baus of Project Architecture, LTD has been retained to redesign the worship space (church) for evangelization and faith formation activities as well as other parish functions. Mr. Baus is creating conceptual drawings illustrating his design(s) for the transformation of the space which will be displayed during the reception after the April 28th Mass.

6. **Offertory & Charitable Giving:** After the merger, St. Mark is no longer considered a legal entity. As a result, some aspects of offertory and charitable giving could be affected. A Fact Sheet answering anticipated questions and providing instruction to assure the transition for offertory and charitable giving to St. Mary is smooth, will be posted on the St. Mark and St. Mary websites as well as distributed in future bulletins.
7. **Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be available in the St. Nicholas Adoration Chapel until April 28, 2024. The Chapel will be left unchanged for the immediate future. Adoration will be held at the Basilica of St. Mary each Thursday starting after the 9 am Mass and ending at 8:00 pm beginning May 2, 2024.

Trusting in the Lord's Goodness and Love

Given the change that is upon us, it is important to keep our eyes on the Lord and trust in His goodness and love. We must walk by faith down the road the Lord opens before us. The change that is upon us is difficult. But God is good! And He will bring good things out of this transition if we remain faithful.