



The Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archdiocese of Indianapolis

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April 19, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Two-and-a-half years ago, pastoral leaders and lay representatives from the parishes in the New Albany and Tell City deaneries began an important planning process called *Connected in the Spirit* 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 in 2008 under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Buechlein and continued under Archbishop Joseph Tobin. Every parish in the Archdiocese has now taken part in *Connected in the Spirit*.

After careful study, personal prayer and a broad consultation that included representatives from the two deaneries, the Archdiocesan Planning Commission, the Council of Priests, the College of Deans and listening sessions with parishioners, I have given my approval to a series of recommendations.

I thank everyone who took part in this planning process and the follow-up listening sessions and I am grateful for the feedback that everyone provided. I have been moved by the tremendous faith of our Catholic community. Thank you for your patience during this lengthy process, which began under Archbishop Tobin and had to be put on hold for several months after he was appointed Archbishop of Newark on November 7, 2016.

Every parish in the New Albany and Tell City deaneries will be affected to some extent by these decisions, which will become effective July 5, 2018. 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.

Most parishes will be asked to share resources or to partner with another parish by creating joint ministries and programs. In addition to combining resources, linked parishes will share a pastor or parish life coordinator. A complete list of mergers, parish linkages and partnerships will be available in your parish bulletin and published in the upcoming issue of *The Criterion*.

Three parishes will merge. St. Peter Parish in Harrison County and Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middleton will be merged into St. Joseph Parish in Corydon. St. Martin of Tours Parish in Siberia will be merged into St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County.

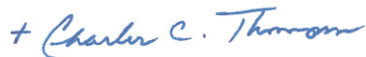
Please note that this letter is not a decree with canonical effects. The proper decrees will be made available by your pastor and will also be published in the upcoming issue of *The Criterion* and put on the archdiocesan website. Anyone from the merged parishes who wishes to appeal may do so in writing to me.

The coming months will bring changes that touch all the faithful of the New Albany and Tell City deaneries, as well as a particular grief for the members of the parishes that will merge. I truly regret any pain these decisions will cause. I am also certain that God is constantly working through us to advance the work of His Church, leading us through sorrow to new and more abundant life.

For me, the ultimate focus is the Kingdom of God and Salvation of Souls. Toward this ultimate focus, the more immediate goal is to strengthen Catholic identity, presence and mission throughout the 39 counties in the 11 deaneries that comprise the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Our unity as *one, holy, catholic and apostolic* Church must be reflected in the ministries and services of our Catholic faith.

May the Holy Spirit continue to fill our hearts with love and give us the wisdom and courage to live out our baptismal call as disciples of our risen Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles C. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis