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For Immediate Release
June 2, 2013

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Archdiocese Announces Parish Mergers In Philadelphia And Delaware County Resulting From Pastoral Planning Initiative

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia announced today that Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. has reviewed recommendations of the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee and made decisions to merge parishes in Philadelphia and Delaware County.

These mergers are the result of ongoing restructuring that will ultimately strengthen parish communities throughout the Archdiocese positioning them for future growth and sustainability. It is hoped that the result will be revitalized parishes throughout the Archdiocese that are better equipped to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of future generations.

The recommendations and resulting mergers are an outcome of the Archdiocesan-wide Parish Pastoral Planning Area initiative, which began in 2011. Parishioners at all affected parishes learned of the final decisions through letters mailed to all registered parishioners as well as announcements made at all Masses this weekend.

The mergers announced today were based on a combination of factors, including, but not limited to, demographic shifts in Catholic populations, concentrated density of parishes in a limited geographic area, history of declining Mass attendance and sacramental activity, increasing economic challenges that threaten sustainability, a decrease in the availability of clergy to staff parishes and a review of facilities.

In each instance of a merger, parishioners will attend daily and Sunday Mass at the church of the newly formed parish. The church of the former parish will remain open and be maintained as a worship site. At the discretion of the pastor, this site will be utilized for weddings, funerals and feast days, as well as traditional and ethnic devotions for the time being. Sunday Mass may also be celebrated at a worship site at the discretion of the pastor and the newly formed pastoral council.

Additionally, all parish property, assets and debts of the former parish will be assumed by the newly created parish, which will also be responsible for the care of all sacramental records. The pastors from the merging parishes will form a transitional team made up of lay leaders from each of the

merging parishes to assist in moving forward with building the new parish community. The Archdiocese will provide ongoing guidance and support during the transition process.

The Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee, made up of lay persons, priests and Archdiocesan personnel, is examining all parishes within the Archdiocese to gauge their viability and assess whether they possess the resources to accomplish their role in the mission of the Church while remaining sustainable and vibrant faith communities. Parishes within each pastoral planning area will continue to carefully and thoughtfully examine their viability in order to make future recommendations. Additional parishes are expected to begin the process of study in the Fall of 2013.

Parish Area Pastoral Planning is designed to be as collaborative and consultative as possible. Its goal is to provide pastors, after consulting their parish leadership, with the opportunity to dialogue with members of the Strategic Planning Committee in providing joint recommendations to the Archbishop for growth and sustainability within their respective geographic areas. Additionally, in the majority of cases, the regional bishop and the dean meet with the pastors as well as their pastoral and finance councils to hear their concerns and receive their recommendations.

The Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee shares all final proposals with the Council of Priests and the College of Consultors for their review before final approval by the Archbishop.

When the mergers detailed below become effective there will be 236 parishes in the five-county Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The pastors assigned to all of the newly formed parishes resulting from this round of mergers were announced this week with the regular priest personnel assignments. A complete list of those assignments can be found at www.CatholicPhilly.com.

It is important to note that the effective date listed for these mergers is set for Canonical (Church law) purposes. The actual work of the transition to a new parish community is an ongoing one that will take varying lengths of time dependent upon the unique circumstances of each merger and needs of each parish. The Archdiocese will provide ongoing guidance and support to all parishes throughout the transitional process.

The statistics presented below do not represent the whole of parish life. They were only one part of the larger picture when developing recommendations for parish mergers. They do, however, provide a snapshot of a parish's sacramental activity and a gauge to project stability, growth or decline.

Delaware County Parish Announcements Effective July 1, 2013:

Eastern Delaware County:

[Saint Laurence and Saint Alice Parishes](#)

Saint Laurence (Upper Darby) and Saint Alice (Upper Darby) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Saint Laurence Parish. The two parishes are located 1.5 miles from each other. The Saint Alice church building will still be maintained as a worship site for the time being.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 6,000 registered parishioners and approximately 2,000 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Saint Laurence Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	46	36
Marriages	20	18
Weekend Mass attendance	1157	1110

<u>Saint Alice Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	45	34
Marriages	10	15
Weekend Mass attendance	1016	923

Saint Philomena and Saint Cyril of Alexandria Parishes

Saint Philomena (Lansdowne) and Saint Cyril of Alexandria (East Lansdowne) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Saint Philomena Parish. The two parishes are located .86 miles from each other. The Saint Cyril of Alexandria church building will still be maintained as a worship site for the time being.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 4,000 registered parishioners and approximately 650 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Saint Philomena Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	13	7
Marriages	8	6
Weekend Mass attendance	471	379

<u>Saint Cyril of Alexandria Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	27	33
Marriages	16	14
Weekend Mass attendance	378	275

Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Louis Parishes

Blessed Virgin Mary (Darby) and Saint Louis (Yeadon) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. The two parishes are located 1.5 miles from each other. The Saint Louis church building will still be maintained as a worship site for the time being.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 2,500 registered parishioners and approximately 500 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Blessed Virgin Mary Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	8	12
Marriages	10	8
Weekend Mass attendance	438	395

<u>Saint Louis Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	5	3
Marriages	5	3
Weekend Mass attendance	295	152

Western Delaware County:

Saint John Fisher, Holy Saviour and Immaculate Conception Parishes

Saint John Fisher (Boothwyn), Holy Saviour (Linwood) and Immaculate Conception (Marcus Hook) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Saint John Fisher Parish. Saint John Fisher is located 2.88 miles from the other two churches. For the time being, the Holy Saviour and Immaculate Conception church buildings will still be maintained as worship sites.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 9,000 registered parishioners and approximately 1,500 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Saint John Fisher Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	57	49
Marriages	12	5
Weekend Mass attendance	750	780

<u>Holy Saviour Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	43	21
Marriages	11	10
Weekend Mass attendance	570	497

<u>Immaculate Conception Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	7	9
Marriages	4	7
Weekend Mass attendance	430	311

Free Standing Parishes:

As a result of the Pastoral Planning Area initiative it has been determined that the following will remain free standing parishes at this time:

Saint Joseph (Aston), Saint Francis de Sales (Lenni), Our Lady of Charity (Brookhaven) and Saint Katharine Drexel (Chester).

Philadelphia Parish Announcements Effective July 1, 2013

Northwest Philadelphia:

Saint Athanasius and Saint Benedict Parishes

Saint Athanasius (West Oak Lane) and Saint Benedict (Ogontz/Belfield) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Saint Athanasius Parishes. The two parishes are located one mile from each other. For the time being, the Saint Benedict church building will still be maintained as a worship site.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 1,700 registered parishioners and approximately 500 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Saint Athanasius Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	15	8
Marriages	3	3
Weekend Mass attendance	387	268

<u>Saint Benedict Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	7	10
Marriages	0	2
Weekend Mass attendance	208	212

Holy Cross, Saint Madeleine Sophie and Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Parishes

Holy Cross (East Mount Airy) Saint Madeleine Sophie (West Mount Airy) and Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (East Mount Airy) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Holy Cross Parish. Holy Cross is located 1.2 miles from Saint Madeleine Sophie and 1.5 miles from Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. For the time being, the Saint Madeleine Sophie and Saint Therese of the Child Jesus church buildings will still be maintained as worship sites.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 2,400 registered parishioners and approximately 460 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Holy Cross Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	10	5
Marriages	3	2
Weekend Mass attendance	298	222

<u>Saint Madeleine Sophie Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	4	2
Marriages	3	0
Weekend Mass attendance	210	88

<u>Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	0	0
Marriages	1	0
Weekend Mass attendance	363	157

Free Standing Parishes:

As a result of the Pastoral Planning Area initiative it has been determined that the following will remain a free standing parish at this time:

Saint Vincent de Paul (East Germantown, Morton, Wister).

Northeast Philadelphia:

Our Lady of Consolation and Saint Leo the Great Parishes

Our Lady of Consolation (Tacony/Wissinoming) and Saint Leo the Great (Tacony/Wissinoming) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Our Lady of Consolation Parish. The two parishes are located .75 miles from each other. For the time being, the Saint Leo the Great church building will still be maintained as worship sites.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 5,500 registered parishioners and approximately 650 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Our Lady of Consolation Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	28	33
Marriages	10	5
Weekend Mass attendance	621	312
<u>Saint Leo the Great Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	17	21
Marriages	5	6
Weekend Mass attendance	555	342

Free Standing Parishes:

As a result of the Pastoral Planning Area initiative it has been determined that the following will remain free standing parishes at this time:

Saint Bartholomew (Frankford), Saint Bernard (Mayfair), Saint Matthew (Mayfair), and Saint Timothy (Mayfair).

Lower Northeast Philadelphia:

Holy Innocents, Saint Joan of Arc, Mater Dolorosa and Saint Joachim Parishes

Holy Innocents (Juniata Park/Feltonville), Saint Joan of Arc (Harrowgate), Mater Dolorosa (Frankford) and Saint Joachim (Frankford) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Holy Innocents Parish. Holy Innocents is located less than 1.5 miles from Saint Joan of Arc, Mater Dolorosa and Saint Joachim. For the time being, the Saint Joan of Arc, Mater Dolorosa, and Saint Joachim church buildings will still be maintained as worship sites.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 8,800 registered parishioners and approximately 1,600 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Holy Innocents Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	44	64
Marriages	16	22
Weekend Mass attendance	965	1187

<u>Saint Joan of Arc Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	9	5
Marriages	2	0
Weekend Mass attendance	149	111

<u>Mater Dolorosa Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	6	8
Marriages	3	3
Weekend Mass attendance	153	194

<u>Saint Joachim Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	9	4
Marriages	5	0
Weekend Mass attendance	324	197

West Philadelphia:

Saint Barbara and Saint Rose of Lima Parishes

Saint Barbara (Wynnefield) and Saint Rose of Lima (Haddington/Carroll Park) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Saint Barbara Parish. The two parishes are located 1.2 miles from each other. For the time being, the Saint Rose of Lima church building will still be maintained as worship sites.

As a result of the merger, the newly formed parish is projected to have over 1,400 registered parishioners and approximately 260 regular attendees at Sunday Mass.

<u>Saint Barbara Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	2	3
Marriages	0	0
Weekend Mass attendance	138	126

<u>Saint Rose of Lima Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	3	0
Marriages	0	0
Weekend Mass attendance	184	143

North Philadelphia, South Philadelphia, Olde City, Center City:

Holy Name of Jesus and Saint Laurentius Parishes

Holy Name of Jesus (Fishtown/Northern Liberties) and Saint Laurentius (Fishtown/Northern Liberties) Parishes will merge at the location and keep the name of Holy Name of Jesus. The two parishes are located a half mile from each other. For the time being, the Saint Laurentius church building will still be maintained as a worship site.

<u>Holy Name of Jesus Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	21	19

Marriages	8	5
Weekend Mass attendance	407	276
<u>Saint Laurentius Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	11	10
Marriages	7	2
Weekend Mass attendance	418	326

Saint Helena, Saint Veronica and Incarnation of Our Lord Parishes:

Incarnation of Our Lord Parish (Olney) will be divided and merge with Saint Helena (Olney) and Saint Veronica (Hunting Park) Parishes. These parishes were not previously engaged in the Parish Pastoral Planning area initiative. However, earlier this year serious concerns regarding the financial condition of Incarnation of Our Lord Parish were brought to the attention of the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee. After a thorough review of the situation and ongoing dialogue between the Archdiocese and leadership from Incarnation of Our Lord Parish, it was determined that the parish did not possess the resources to sustain itself any longer.

Incarnation of Our Lord Parish is 1.1 miles from Saint Helena Parish and 1.8 miles from Saint Veronica Parish. Parishioners who live north of the Roosevelt Boulevard will attend Mass at Saint Helena Parish. Parishioners who live south of the Roosevelt Boulevard will attend Mass at Saint Veronica Parish. The Incarnation of Our Lord church building will remain open as a worship site of Saint Helena Parish for the time being.

<u>Saint Helena Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	66	41
Marriages	13	16
Weekend Mass attendance	1282	1124

<u>Saint Veronica Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	18	10
Marriages	9	5
Weekend Mass attendance	742	691

<u>Incarnation of Our Lord Parish:</u>	2007	2011
Infant Baptisms	48	20
Marriages	12	9
Weekend Mass attendance	1210	685

Free Standing Parishes:

As a result of the Pastoral Planning Area initiative it has been determined that the following will remain free standing parishes at this time:

Saint Agnes-Saint John Nepomucene (Fishtown/Northern Liberties), Saint Augustine (Center City East), Saint Michael (Fishtown/Northern Liberties), Old Saint Joseph's (Center City East), Old Saint

Mary's (Center City East), and Saint Peter the Apostle (Fishtown/Northern Liberties).

Previous Announcements:

In January, February and May 2013, the Archdiocese announced parish mergers resulting from the Parish Area Pastoral Planning Initiative in North Philadelphia, Lower Northeast Philadelphia and West Philadelphia. Additional information regarding those mergers can be found at http://archphila.org/conversion/conversion_index.php.

Last year, the Archdiocese announced initial rounds of parish mergers resulting from the Parish Area Pastoral Planning Initiative in Coatesville and Phoenixville in Chester County as well as the Germantown, Harrowgate, and Manayunk sections of Philadelphia. Additional information regarding those mergers can also be found at http://archphila.org/conversion/conversion_index.php.

Future Announcements:

It is expected that additional parishes will engage in the Parish Pastoral Planning Area Initiative in the Fall of 2013. Appropriate announcements will be made in those parishes as well as to the general public at that time.

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Editor's Note: The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is comprised of 44 Pastoral Planning Areas (PPAs). It is expected that the remainder of the first 22 PPAs will complete the work of planning and implementation over the next 15 months. For more information on the Parish Area Pastoral Planning, please visit http://archphila.org/conversion/conversion_index.php.

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