



February 14, 2025

Dear Parishioners of St. John the Apostle Parish,

Phase 3 of the Targeted Restructuring process, which included parishes in DuPage, Will and Grundy counties, is now complete. The Diocesan Targeted Restructuring Committee began this third phase in April of 2024 and over the next eight months, the Committee engaged in an intentional process to determine the future of these parishes. On December 20th I received the Committee's recommendations. After much prayer and discernment, I have decided to accept the Committee's recommendations. On February 13, 2025, I consulted with our Presbyteral Council, in accord with Canon Law. The Presbyteral Council unanimously approved my acceptance of the restructuring recommendations for Phase 3.

Accordingly, I have rendered the following decision:

St. John the Apostle in Villa Park will amalgamate into St. Alexander in Villa Park.

St. John the Apostle will close its church and buildings.

These changes will go into effect as of July 1, 2025. There will be much information shared with your pastor and parish leadership regarding the next steps, and the support that will be provided by the Diocese. I encourage you to read all the information concerning the restructuring process and decisions on the Diocesan website. You will find on the website my official decision, a video about the process and answers to a number of frequently asked questions, including the definition of church terms that we use in these decisions.

I want you to know I have listened to you. I have heard and read your concerns and reservations. I have humbly witnessed your faith devotion, your personal sacrifices and your parish commitment. Be assured the Targeted Restructuring Committee and I considered with respect your input, insights and suggestions. And while I am confident these decisions are the right ones for the future of the Church, I understand these results are very difficult when they directly affect you and your family. Change is hard. The changes may affect where you worship, how far you need to drive to attend mass or participate in parish events, and what you consider to be your intimate faith community. I appreciate these decisions may cause you to be sad and lead to a time of grieving.

During the parish sessions last year, the following scripture was shared, which I hope provides you solace:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." (John 14:1-7)

Thank you for your love of Jesus Christ and your commitment to His Church. With great faith and hope, let us ask the Holy Spirit to bless, lead, and guide us in these next steps within the Diocese of Joliet. May God bless you today and always.

As I remain –

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks

Bishop of Joliet