



NEWS RELEASE

DIOCESE OF ERIE

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All three parishes in Meadville to merge, new parish to be established

St. Agatha Church will become the parish church

Father Jeffrey Lucas, pastor of all three parishes in what has been known in recent years as the Catholic Community of Meadville, announced on May 15 that the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, after consultation with the presbyteral council, has accepted the parishes' proposed pastoral plan to merge St. Agatha Parish, St. Brigid Parish and St. Mary of Grace Parish, all located in Meadville. The merger, effective June 26, will be an "extinctive union," by which a new parish will be formed from the three merged parishes. St. Agatha Church will be the parish church for the new parish while St. Brigid and St. Mary of Grace churches will become secondary churches without mission status. This means they will remain open to the faithful at least occasionally for public or private worship, but Masses will not be celebrated there on Sundays, holy days, or the evenings preceding them.

The history of the parishes in Meadville is more complex than most, and a complete record of the parishes, as well as a detailed narrative

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of the current situation, is described in the decree announcing the bishop's decision, available at www.ErieRCD.org/bishop/decrees.html. The decree also involves St. Hippolyte Parish in Frenchtown, which consents to the new situation in light of the fact that more than 150 years ago, when St. Hippolyte Parish was established, its territory extended to Meadville.

A pastoral planning process involving parishes throughout the Diocese of Erie was completed in 2017. After an initial diocesan-wide restructuring, the plan was designed to encourage parishes to evaluate their own situations going forward, and to make recommendations to the bishop from the local level. The combined pastoral council and the pastor of the Meadville parishes began work on a local planning process in the summer of 2019. The goal was to determine how the community could best prepare itself to meet future needs of evangelization, care of the poor, ministry to the sick, education, religious formation and other essential works. The process involved considerable input not only from the clergy and pastoral council, but also from the three parish finance councils and parishioners from all three parishes.

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