



# DECREE

## OF THE RENAMING OF

### NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PARISH, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA TO ST. JOHN PAUL II PARISH

On May 13, 2019, the merger of St. Adalbert Parish, St. George Parish, Mother of Divine Grace Parish, and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, all in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was decreed, with an effective date of July 1, 2019. These along with the previously merged Our Lady Help of Christians Parish resulted in a parish bearing the name “Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish,” or “Nativity B.V.M. Parish,” with the parish church being designated as St. Adalbert Church.

While the people of the parish have been working to unite the merged community, there remains some dissatisfaction with the retention of the name “Nativity B.V.M.” for the parish. The pastor of Nativity B.V.M. has stated that the parish pastoral council and many other people of the parish have asked that the name of the parish be changed, such that it is not a name that had been used by one of the merged parishes. The following reasons were given in support of a change in this regard:

- 1) There is confusion because the name of the parish, Nativity B.V.M., is also the title of one of the churches in the parish. While this church remains open, it is not the designated parish church, which is St. Adalbert. Thus, people going to the parish church of Nativity B.V.M. Parish may mistakenly travel to Nativity B.V.M. Church instead of St. Adalbert Church.
- 2) Changing the name of the parish, such that it is not a name that had been used by one of the merged parishes, will help to unify the people of this parish.

After consultation with the people of the parish, the pastor has requested that the new name be “St. John Paul II Parish.” The reasons proposed by the pastor for this choice are the following:

- 1) Pope St. John Paul II, when he was Archbishop of Krakow, spent a considerable amount of time in the Port Richmond section of the city in 1976 during the Eucharistic Congress. He lived at St. Adalbert for over three weeks, celebrated Mass in its church, and ran a “poor man’s supper.” Many people living in the parish remember his stay in the area.
- 2) Pope St. John Paul II was seen as a “pilgrim pope” who visited every country represented by the major ethnic groups in the parish’s neighborhood, going to, among other places, Poland, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Mexico, El Salvador, Thailand, and Nigeria. He would be seen as a model for what the people of the parish wish to achieve in coming together as one parish community.
- 3) A relic of the blood of Pope St. John Paul II is enshrined in St. Adalbert Church, and there is great devotion to him in the neighborhood.

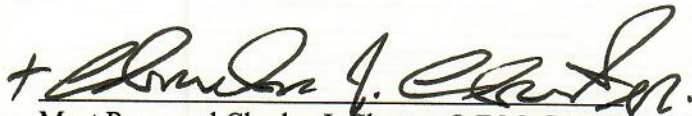
4) There is currently no parish in the archdiocese bearing the name of Pope St. John Paul II.

Insofar as the reasons adduced both for there being a change in the name of the parish and for the proposed new name are sound, and having consulted with the Council of Priests, in accord with paragraph 12 of the notification "De Titulo Ecclesiae" of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments dated February 10, 1999, I **DECREE** that this parish's current name, "Nativity B.V.M. Parish," be changed to "St. John Paul II Parish."

It is to be noted that this decree has no effect whatsoever on the titles of the individual churches pertaining to this parish, which remain the same as they had been.

This Decree is effective on the feast of St. John Paul II, namely October 22, 2019, and is to be communicated to the members of this parish and to the faithful of the Archdiocese in an appropriate manner. Canonical recourse to this Decree is to be sought according to the norms of canon law. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Curia of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October in the Year of Our Lord 2019.



Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia

**SEAL**



Reverend Monsignor Gerard C. Mesure, J.D., J.C.D.  
Chancellor