



OUR LADY OF THE  
**ROSARY**

1736 Burrstone Road  
NEW HARTFORD, N.Y. 13413  
Phone: (315) 724-0402

April 22, 2021

Dear Parishioner:

In the midst of the Easter Season may Peace be with you.

I hope this letter finds you and your family well in these ongoing days of the pandemic. It has certainly made us pause and examine what is important to us in life.

Most of you probably are aware of the priest situation in the Syracuse Diocese and more importantly, in the Utica area. Currently there are 16 parishes served by 11 active priests, of which 7 are over 70, including myself. This year, 4 new priests will be ordained while 5 others have announced their retirement. Next year no one will be ordained to the priesthood in the diocese.

Our two parishes have been linked (two parishes with one pastor) for the past four years. Before this linkage, we had three priests serving both of our parishes. Currently there is only one. Since the linkage began, we have joined together in worship and many of our ministries now work together to achieve their mission.

Prior to the pandemic, I assembled a group of each parish's lay leaders to review our relationship and consider the best way for our parishes to move forward. The group considered the current priest situation, what we have accomplished together and gave serious thought to future changes which may take place in Utica area parishes. They concluded that the best possible solution is to merge our two parishes and form a new, unified parish. As such, we will share ministerial resources, better address financial needs and allow clergy to focus on spiritual care.

In January, this recommendation was presented to Bishop Lucia who gave his approval and encouragement to proceed.

Since then, a Steering Committee comprised of each parish's lay trustees, finance council chair and pastoral council chair has been meeting to discuss the process of unifying the two parishes. Through many discussions, the committee has identified several steps they feel must be accomplished.

**The first step is to have a series of meetings with you, the parishioners.** In these meetings, we will provide a synopsis of our work, listen to your input and do our best to respond to questions you may have.

*(Please turn over the page for more information)*

I invite you to please attend *one (1)* of the following meetings:

May 4 at 3:00 pm at Our Lady of Lourdes Church

May 4 at 6:00 pm at Our Lady of Lourdes Church

May 6 at 3:00 pm at Our Lady of the Rosary Church

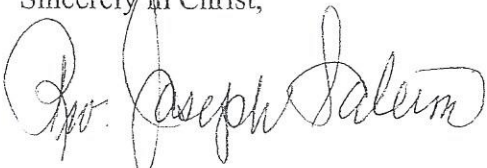
May 6 at 6:00 pm at Our Lady of the Rosary Church

I encourage you to attend the meeting that best fits into your schedule. They are not parish-specific meetings. You can register on either parish's website, Facebook page or call 315-316-1129, not later than May 3.

I realize that this will be a change for all of us. These are challenging times and also times of opportunity. I hope you will continue to provide your support by coming together into one faith community.

Let us all pray for wisdom and for courage.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Joseph Salerno". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Rev. Joseph Salerno

Pastor