



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
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Rochester, New York 14624
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COPY

June 4, 2020
Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Reverend and dear Father Gathenya:

Subsequent to our telephone conversation today, June 4, 2020, I write to confirm that, because of the reservations you expressed about a proposal made to you about future pastoral configurations in Auburn, you will remain as pastor of Holy Family Parish, Auburn, Saint Alphonsus Parish, Auburn, Sacred Heart Parish, Auburn, and its mission, Saint Ann Church, Owasco, with the understanding that other Diocesan needs can arise which may require future consideration.

Additionally, I reiterate that it is compulsory that during this next year, 2020-2021, significant progress must be made in developing and implementing a pastoral plan which respects the entire city of Auburn and Northern Cayuga County. Thus, your efforts are to be in collaboration with The Very Reverend Frank E. Lioi, Dean of the East Deanery, and Pastor of Saint Mary Parish, Auburn, Saints Mary and Martha Parish, Auburn, and Our Lady of the Snow Parish, Weedsport. In his role as Dean, Father Lioi is entrusted with the coordination of pastoral activity of this area of our Diocese.

Recognizing both the strong Catholic faith and tradition of the faith communities in this area of our Diocese, I am also very mindful of the ongoing demographic changes and circumstances in the parishes, namely the declining attendance at Mass due to demographics and an aging population, as well as the financial and personnel considerations and the resources available to keep a vibrant faith alive and strong in Auburn and Northern Cayuga County. Parish planning is no longer at our doorsteps but has crossed the threshold causing us to escalate and move forward with necessary and additional parish reconfigurations throughout the Diocese. This essential endeavor has now been exacerbated further by the present and ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

On February 14, 2018, I responded to the report from the planning team and affirmed the recommendation supporting the forming of two clusters with two pastors and encouraged progress in "further cultivating a cooperative spirit in the areas of catechesis, youth ministry, and shared finance and administrative staffing." To date, I am

The Reverend Father John G. Gathenya
Holy Family Parish
85 North Street
Auburn, New York 13021

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unaware as to the extent this has been realized. This collaboration is not an option due to the statistics below which indicate a serious decline in all areas of parish life:

Auburn and Northern Cayuga County Region (St. Alphonsus, Holy Family, Sacred Heart, St. Mary, Ss. Mary & Martha, Rochester; St. Ann, Owasco; and Our Lady of the Snow, Weedsport)			
	2011	2019	Decline
Households	4,994	4,296	-14%
Mass Attendance	4,204	2,694	-36%
Masses	20	20	0%
Faith Formation	722	297	-59%
Baptisms	187	112	-40%
First Holy Communions	152	71	-53%
Confirmations	201	91	-55%
Weddings	60	38	-37%
Funerals	257	232	-10%

Your parish pastoral councils and parish finance councils should be made aware of these statistics.

Noting the above, it is absolutely necessary to make decisions that focus on identifying ministerial needs and appropriate staffing; addressing the significant amount of unused or underutilized property and reducing that costly footprint; strengthening our Catholic community into the future through intentional stewardship of its time, talent and treasure. I have asked our Diocesan Offices to assist you and Father Lioi in every manner possible so you may make significant progress now in this regard and **develop a pastoral plan which respects the entire city of Auburn and Northern Cayuga County.** Please contact Ms. Lisa M. Passero, Chief Finance Officer, and Mr. Bernard

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Grizard, Director of Pastoral Services, as soon as possible; both are most willing to guide you in assessing the needs of your parishes with attention to the resources available. Additionally, I am asking Mr. Grizard to provide me with monthly updates on your progress.

Assuring you of a memento in my prayers and asking a remembrance in your good prayers, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Salvatore R. Matano

*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester*

cc: The Very Reverend Father Paul J. Tomasso, Vicar General and Director of
Priests' Personnel
The Very Reverend Father Frank E. Lioi, Dean, East Deanery ✓
The Reverend Father Justin D. Miller, Parochial Vicar, Saint Mary Parish,
Auburn, Saints Mary and Martha Parish, Auburn, and Our Lady of the Snow
Parish, Weedsport
The Reverend Father Michael R. Brown, Parochial Vicar, Holy Family Parish,
Auburn, Saint Alphonsus Parish, Auburn, Sacred Heart Parish, Auburn, and
its mission, Saint Ann Church, Owasco
Ms. Lisa M. Passero, Chief Finance Officer
Mr. Bernard Grizard, Director of Pastoral Services