



Diocese of Youngstown

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

March 19, 2026

Dear Parishioners of St. Patrick, the Newman Center and Immaculate Conception Parishes,

I am writing to you today with an important update regarding the future of the Catholic Community in Kent and in Ravenna which points to a new vitality in the Lord's vineyard. Over the past months your parish leadership along with the finance and parish councils have been engaged in prayerful discernment regarding the best way to ensure a vibrant, sustainable Catholic presence in the Cities of Kent and Ravenna.

As part of the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of Youngstown to strengthen our mission in a time of changing demographics and a shortage of priests, I am announcing that in consultation with your parish leadership and the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the parish communities of St. Patrick, Kent, the University Parish Newman Center, Kent and Immaculate Conception Parish, Ravenna will merge to form a new parish community named Saint Katharine Drexel effective July 1, 2026.

This merger is about mission and vitality. By merging, we can share resources, reduce administrative duplication and better focus our energy on evangelization and serving the faithful. This decision aims to create a stronger, more vibrant community where we can better serve you, our families and our neighbors.

To support this new parish, I have appointed a new pastoral leadership team to serve the newly formed parish. The diocese will be moving to a model of pastoral care entitled *in solidum*, meaning, several priests sharing full and joint responsibility for the pastoral care of parishes, effective July 1, 2026. With the retirement of Father William Kraynak and Father William Wainio accepting the full-time ministry as Vocation Director for the Diocese of Youngstown, Father Kevin Bertleff and Father John Rovnak will work together as a team to serve the parishes of St. John Neumann and the newly merged parish of Saint Katharine Drexel. This model emphasizes shared leadership over the traditional model of a single pastor per parish, encouraging shared responsibility for the parishes spiritual and administrative life.

I know that change can be difficult and that you may feel anxiety about the unknown. Please know that your pastoral team is committed to making this transition as smooth as possible. Together let us pray, "That All May Be One."

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown

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