DECREE

OF THE AMALGAMATION OF

SAINT FRANCIS SERAPH PARISH,
CINCINNATI, OHIO,

INTO

SAINT CLEMENT PARISH,
SAINT BERNARD, OHIO

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Francis Seraph Parish was founded in 1858; the current church was completed in 1859. Saint Clement Parish was founded in 1850, and its present church building was completed in 1873.

Since July 2022 both parishes have been served by a common pastor. With the reorganization of the Franciscan Friars in the United States to form one province under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the provincial leadership of the Friars has evaluated their ministerial footprint throughout the country and is seeking to establish an organizational structure which would facilitate a better use of both human and financial resources. They have determined that this would best be accomplished in the city of Cincinnati by the proposed amalgamation and, as a separate canonical process, the relegation of Saint Francis Seraph Church to profane but non-sordid use.

Under the leadership of a single pastor, the administrative functions of the parishes are being united and streamlined, and the parishioners continue to grow together as a community of faith, united in their common Franciscan spirituality. Discussions have taken place between the pastor, the other clergy and lay staff serving the parishes, the parishioners, and the appropriate archdiocesan offices regarding the best way to meet the needs of the faithful and evangelize in accordance with the mandate of the Lord Jesus.

The pastor of Saint Francis Seraph and Saint Clement Parishes, having consulted the members of both the pastoral councils and finance councils and having heard from the parishioners of both parishes, has proposed an extinctive union in which Saint Francis Seraph Parish is amalgamated into Saint Clement Parish. The pastor and people of these parishes believe this arrangement to be a fitting means to both best meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of the faithful and more effectively manage the resources at their disposal. Having consulted the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on May 16, 2026, I have determined that the pastoral mission of the Catholic Church in this portion of the Archdiocese of

Cincinnati would best be served through such an amalgamation of Saint Francis Seraph Parish into Saint Clement Parish.

The following factors are identified as contributing to a just cause for this proposed modification:

1) Since 2022 when one priest was assigned as pastor of both parishes, administrative and ministerial have become more unified.
2) Parishioners from the parishes have come together for worship and to support social outreach and evangelization ministries in their community.
3) Uniting the parishes into one would simplify the determination of financial allocation and responsibility.
4) Uniting into one parish would reduce the administrative burden on clergy and staff:
   - finance council meetings, sacramental registers, financial accounts, and other committee meetings would be reduced from two to one
5 This proposal would provide the opportunity for enhanced collaborative ministry and better utilization of clergy and lay personnel and allow for greater emphasis to be placed on evangelization.

Taking into account the supreme law of the Church, i.e. the salvation of souls (cf. canon 1752), it is my belief that this action will better serve the Church's mission to evangelize and allow for more efficient administration of the temporal goods of the faithful.

Therefore, in virtue of my office as diocesan bishop, in accordance with canon 515 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby decree the extinctive union by amalgamation of Saint Francis Seraph Parish (Cincinnati) into Saint Clement Parish (Saint Bernard).

The intentions of the founders and donors regarding the temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to the former parish of Saint Francis Seraph must be respected. Furthermore, the patrimonial goods, rights, and assets, including *bona sacra* and religious articles, as well as the obligations and liabilities of the former parish of Saint Francis Seraph shall belong to Saint Clement Parish, according to the norm of law (canon 121). This includes the temporal goods and administration thereof associated with Saint Francis Seraph School, which is currently a ministry of Saint Francis Seraph Parish. The pastor of Saint Clement Parish will be responsible for the administration of all the temporal goods, in accordance with the universal law of the Church and the particular law of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The territory of Saint Clement Parish shall include the territory of the former parish of Saint Francis Seraph.

I further decree that Saint Clement Church will be the parochial church. Saint Francis Seraph Church, by a separate decree, is to be relegated to profane but non-sordid use.

The sacramental records of the former parish of Saint Francis Seraph shall be closed and remain in the care and custody of Saint Clement Parish to be properly preserved and safeguarded.

The parishioners of the former parish of Saint Francis Seraph are to associate themselves with their new proper territorial parish, Saint Clement Parish, or another parish of their choice in accordance with universal and archdiocesan law.

The rich history and legacy of the former parish of Saint Francis Seraph are to be held in high esteem and rightly honored. Furthermore, the people of Saint Clement Parish, under the leadership of their pastor, are to strive diligently, with God's help, to form a unified, harmonious congregation dedicated to fulfilling the mission that Jesus Christ committed to his disciples.

This decree becomes effective on July 1, 2026, and is to be published such that all members of Saint Francis Seraph Parish and Saint Clement Parish will be properly notified. Recourse may be made against this decree in accord with the norms of canon law.

Given from the Chancery of the Archdiocese,
Cincinnati, Ohio,
on the 8th day of June in the Year of Our Lord 2026,
Monday of the Tenth Week in Ordinary Time.

+ Robert G. Casey

Most Reverend Robert G. Casey
Archbishop of Cincinnati

SEAL

Reverend Jason A. Williams, J.C.L.
Chancellor