



DIOCESE OF GARY

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Bishop of Gary

February 28, 2026

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last year I commissioned a steering committee to work with the clergy and key lay leaders from the nine Catholic parishes and two mission churches in the Laporte/Starke County area to assess the current situation and develop a recommendation for the future. It was clear that each parish and mission possesses unique strengths and strongly-committed parishioners and clergy.

While acknowledging some isolated signs of growth, an overall analysis of data revealed a multi-year downward trend in key metrics such as Mass attendance and participation in the sacraments, as well as a decrease in ministry. The group considered and evaluated several parish models, leading to a recommendation to unify some of the Catholic communities in this area. The group recognized that a shared vision is necessary to best support the spiritual needs of our faithful and maximize collective talents and resources. This led to a recommendation which spoke of unifying some of the Catholic communities and reducing the number of parishes and missions.

After prayerful reflection and unanimous support of the deans, I am accepting the key leaders' recommendations with some minor adaptations. Therefore, over the next several years, there will be a transition to a three-parish model with three additional worship sites that will provide for the spiritual, sacramental, cultural and pastoral needs of Catholics in the Laporte/Starke area. The three parishes will be: Holy Family in Laporte with an additional worship site at St. John Kanty; Sacred Heart in Wanatah with an additional worship site at St. Mary, Otis; and St. Thomas Aquinas with an additional worship site at Ss. Cyril and Methodius. I envision complete implementation of this transition to take place over the next few years, occurring in phases. An outline of this process is attached.

I recognize this announcement will affect people differently. Some will experience feelings of loss and anger. Other people may see this model as a new beginning, creating opportunities for growth and vitality for the Catholic presence in this area. One of the criteria that your key leaders emphasized was that signature ministries would be relocated for their continuance, and so your early and intentional engagement will be the key to the success of this process, ensuring that all voices are heard, and the desired results are achieved.

Please know that I am committed to supporting you in this process. We are all seeking the Lord's guidance, wisdom, and strength so that the Catholic Church in the Laporte/Starke County area will always be a vibrant, caring, and disciple-driven community. You can be confident of my abiding prayers for all the members of these parishes during this time of transition.

Asking God's blessings upon you, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary

Proposed Outline of the Transition Process
Laporte/Starke Planning Area

Outcome: The transition to a three-parish model with three additional worship sites that will provide for the spiritual, sacramental, and pastoral needs of Catholics in the Laporte/Starke County area. The three parishes will be: Holy Family in Laporte with an additional worship site at St. John Kanty; Sacred Heart in Wanatah with an additional worship site at St. Mary, Otis; and St. Thomas Aquinas with an additional worship site at Ss. Cyril and Methodius

2026 and following:

- Bishop McClory announces the transition to a three-parish model with three additional worship sites that will lead to the transition process and collaboration of Catholics in the Laporte/Starke County area for the spiritual, sacramental, and pastoral care of the community.
- After completing the required canonical processes, All Saints in San Pierre will merge with Ss. Cyril and Methodius to become one parish. At an appropriate time, and after the required canonical processes, All Saints campus will conclude its time as a worship site and the community will be relocated to the other campus for spiritual, sacramental and pastoral care.
- At an appropriate time following the All Saints and Ss. Cyril and Methodius merger described above, and after completing the required canonical processes, Ss. Cyril and Methodius will merge with St. Thomas Aquinas to become one parish with these two worship sites. Factors may include the retirement, reassignment, or health of the pastor, demographic shifts, and financial and/or physical status of the parish itself.
- After completing the required canonical processes, St. Mary in Otis will merge with Sacred Heart in Wanatah to become one parish with these two worship sites. At an appropriate time, and after the required canonical processes, St. Martin Mission will conclude its time as a mission church and the community will be relocated to the other campuses for spiritual, sacramental and pastoral care.
- At an appropriate time, and after completing the required canonical processes, Holy Cross Parish and St. Dominic Mission will cease being used for worship and the community will be relocated to neighboring parishes for spiritual, sacramental, and pastoral care. Factors may include the retirement, reassignment, or health of the pastor, demographic shifts, and financial and/or physical status of the parish itself.
- After completing the required canonical process, St. Anthony of Padua will merge with St. John Kanty to become one parish. At an appropriate time, and after completing the required canonical process, St. John Kanty will merge with Holy Family to become one parish with multiple worship sites, and St. Anthony campus will conclude its time as a worship site and the community will be relocated to the other campuses. Factors may include the retirement, reassignment, or health of the pastor, demographic shifts, and financial and/or physical status of the parish itself.