



February 17, 2021

To the faithful of Stella Maris Parish,

As part of our effort to create new parishes, Archbishop Mancini and I asked each parish to conduct a review of their current and future resources needed for missionary renewal. In December of 2020, Fr. Jose and Greg Aikins wrote to me in order to request the closure of St. John the Baptist Church in Halifax.

The request came after much discussion and discernment of the issue.

The December 2020 letter outlined several significant concerns that had prompted this discernment:

- Declining attendance
- Significant (and costly) repairs and capital projects needed for the building
- Financial concerns, including consistent annual deficits for the former parish of St. John the Baptist and a projected 2020 deficit of \$65,000 for Stella Maris Parish.

This proposal was a forward-looking one – the primary goal was and continues to be one of more and better outreach from Stella Maris Parish for the process of evangelization.

I reviewed the proposal, consulted with the archdiocesan executive team, the Council of Priests, and the Archdiocesan Finance Committee. We found that the proposal has merit. I want to provide an opportunity for those connected to St. John the Baptist Church to provide feedback on this proposal. As a result, I will visit the parish, at the St. John the Baptist location, on Tuesday March 2, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. We will begin with Mass and then have some time to hear any parishioners as they respond to this recommendation to close John the Baptist Church. Following my visit, additional consultation will occur in small groups throughout the parish.

I understand this is a difficult announcement for anyone to read. However, I also believe that it is necessary – and ultimately fruitful – in helping Stella Maris Parish become a community of missionary disciples, and a community that truly is a beacon of hope and love.

Your input is important and, I believe, the conversation is worth having. Please know that you have my support, my commitment to be present and involved, and my prayers as you continue to grow in your new parish identity.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Brian Joseph Dunn
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth