



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL
1011 FIRST AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

November 2, 2014
All Souls Day

Dear friends in the Lord:

As you know, the Catholic family of the Archdiocese of New York has for the last five years been engaged in an extensive pastoral planning process, *Making All Things New*. This process intensified over the past fourteen months, as we asked even more specifically for the input of our Catholic faithful, through parish clusters, for their assistance in helping plan for our future. Thanks to all of you who were part of it.

We listened to your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions; we evaluated all the material and input presented by our parish clusters; and we sought the recommendations of others as well, such as an advisory board comprised of clergy, religious women and men, and members of the faithful from the nineteen vicariates (deaneries) of the archdiocese; our archdiocesan pastoral council; the college of consultors; our auxiliary bishops; key staff members; and the priests' council.

So, I trust you will see that the archdiocese has been engaged in what amounts to a monumental amount of information gathering and consultation.

Having concluded our process, I have made my decisions, and your parish is involved.

The Parishes of Saint John the Evangelist and Our Lady of Peace will merge into a new parish. The church of Saint John the Evangelist will be designated as the new parish church. At the present time, although remaining a church which may be used on special occasions, Masses and the sacraments will no longer be celebrated on a regular weekly basis at the church of Our Lady of Peace.

I went through a similar process when I served as Archbishop of Milwaukee, and so I know from first-hand experience the pain, hurt, and suffering that comes with this news. But, I ask you—no, I implore you—to put these feelings aside and join with us in planning for a brighter future.

The goal of *Making All Things New* was simple: to ensure that all of our parishes are active, vibrant communities of faith. You will be part of a new community of faith, now joining with the faithful of the Parish of Saint John the Evangelist in becoming a new spiritual family where all of you will gather as one to worship the Lord and engage in the works of the Church. This will be a trying and testing time of transition, but I am

confident that, two parishes joined together as one new parish, will create the strength that we planned for the future of our archdiocese.

You will have many questions about the implementation of this merger over the days, weeks, and months to come, such as, will there be a new name? Will there be a new pastor? Will the schedules change? We will have a transition team working very closely with you and your pastor to ensure that your new parish is formed to the best of everyone's ability. Our anticipation is that, for most parishes, this transition will be completed by August 1, 2015.

Again, I realize that this is a time of sadness for the Parish of Our Lady of Peace. I am sorry to bring you this somber news, but feel I should be the one to tell you. You are in my prayers in a very special way. At the same time, with absolute trust and confidence in the Lord, I know that the new parish family formed by the merger of the Parishes of Saint John the Evangelist and Our Lady of Peace will be a great blessing for all.

With prayerful best wishes for a blessed fall, Thanksgiving, and Advent, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

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Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York