DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG
Office of the Chancellor

Mailing Address:
Post Office Box 40200
St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0200
www.dosp.org

Office:
6363 Ninth Avenue North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33710
727-344-1611
Fax: 727-345-3086

MEMORANDUM

TO: **All Active Priests in the Diocese of Saint Petersburg**
Catholic School Principals
Pastoral Center, Bethany Center, Calvary Catholic Cemetery and Spirit FM Staff

FROM: **Deacon Rick Wells, J.C.L., Chancellor for Canonical Affairs** *R.W.*

SUBJECT: **Announcement of Status Change – Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Tampa**

DATE: **March 25, 2025, Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**

Most Reverend Gregory Parkes, Bishop of Saint Petersburg, announces the following change, ***effective July 1, 2025***:

After careful study of Pope Francis' *motu proprio Traditionis Custodes and* having prayerfully reflected on spiritual needs expressed by the faithful in the Diocese devoted to the Roman Rite celebrated according to the *Roman Missal* of 1962, the canonical status of Epiphany of Our Lord Catholic Church, in Tampa, Florida, will be converted from a parochial church to a diocesan shrine.

The newly established shrine will be known as the Epiphany of Our Lord Shrine. It will be a place of pilgrimage for those throughout the Diocese devoted to the liturgical fruits of the antecedent liturgy and the incarnational spirituality of the Epiphany when the Heavenly Father manifested through signs and wonders the newborn Christ as a light to the nations.

To ensure the Shrine's devotional mission and purpose, Bishop Parkes has entrusted the pastoral care of the faithful who worship at the Shrine to the priests of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest (https://institute-christ-king.org). The Institute will propose clergy of their Society to Bishop Parkes to be appointed to staff the Shrine.

The process that led to this decision to establish Epiphany of Our Lord Shrine began with the request of parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord Parish with the encouragement of their Pastor, Reverend Edwin Palka. The parishioners were seeking a way to conform to the wishes of the

Holy Father for the antecedent liturgy and to ensure stability for the congregation worshiping, according to the 1962 *Roman Missal*. Thereafter, the Diocese of Saint Peterburg entered into conversations with the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, an International Apostolic Society of Pontifical Right, which has successfully served in Dioceses around the United States. These conversations concluded the Priests and Brothers of the Institute are best suited to provide pastoral care and foster the spiritual mission of the Shrine.

While the transition of Epiphany of Our Lord Church from a parochial church to a diocesan shrine will be effective July 1, 2025, the Institute's priests will assume pastoral care of the Shrine as of September 1, 2025. In July and August, Father Palka will provide pastoral care of the Shrine before assuming a new assignment.

After hearing from the Presbyteral Council, Bishop Parkes adjusted the parish boundaries of St Lawrence and Mary Help of Christians to assume the territory formerly belonging to Epiphany, so that the pastoral care of the faithful will be undertaken by the parish in which boundaries their residence is situated.

Two other communities in the Diocese of St. Petersburg celebrate the liturgy according to the 1962 *Roman Missal* in parochial churches: St. Anthony the Abbot, Brooksville, and St. Justin, Martyr, Seminole. Presently, these communities do so with an indult of the Apostolic See. Bishop Parkes will continue to work with these communities to ensure the stability of pastoral care in conformity with *Traditionis Custodes* and with pastoral solicitude for the spiritual needs of the faithful.