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St. Dominic to Close; Outreach Center Will Remain Open

Precious Blood and St. Francis to Merge and Become St. Peter Claver

Utilizing *Together in Faith*, the strategic planning process now underway in the Archdiocese of Detroit, St. Dominic, a parish in the Wayne State University area, has been granted approval from Cardinal Adam Maida to close. In addition, two parishes in northwest Detroit, Precious Blood and St. Francis de Sales, have received permission to merge and form St. Peter Claver Parish. Further information about *Together in Faith*, including proposed draft plans for parishes and schools, can be found online at www.AODonline.org.

The closing Mass for St. Dominic Parish, 4856 Trumbull, will be at 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 12, and is open to the public. A reception will follow. Fr. Mark Soehner, OFM, pastor of St. Dominic, will be the celebrant of the Mass. Fr. Soehner also serves as pastor of Detroit's St. Patrick Parish and pastor of St. Aloysius Parish in downtown Detroit.

Although the parish will be closing, St. Dominic's Outreach Center will remain in operation. The Outreach Center is located on parish grounds, in the former convent at 4835 Lincoln Avenue. It provides food, clothing, personal hygiene kits and other items to nearly 200 people per month.

St. Dominic Parish was founded in 1926 in the former Brewster Congregational Church, which had been built in 1890. The parish was operated by the Dominican Fathers until 1999 and staffed by diocesan priests until this year. At one time, it had over 800 families. Currently, there are 64 active members, who would be welcome at any of the 44 Catholic parishes located within a five-mile radius of St. Dominic.

"With so few parishioners, \$40,000 in unpaid bills from last fiscal year, and an estimated repair bill of \$500,000 to fix the parish buildings, it was decided to close the parish," said Fr. Soehner. "However, keeping the Outreach Center open was critical and Cardinal Maida made such a proviso when he approved the parish closure."

Precious Blood currently has 106 families and St. Francis de Sales has 85 families. When they merge to form the new St. Peter Claver Catholic Community, they will use the former Precious Blood worship site at 13305 Grove (near W. McNichols and Schaefer) and maintain the former St. Francis de Sales site, 10600 Fenkell (between Schaefer and Wyoming), as an annex for parish programs.

The first Mass at St. Peter Claver, 13305 Grove, a *Liturgy of Unity*, will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Sunday, November 27, and is open to the public. Auxiliary Bishop John Quinn will be the principal celebrant and homilist. Fr. James O'Reilly, SJ, the current pastor of St. Francis de Sales, will be among the concelebrants and will be installed as the first pastor of St. Peter Claver. Wyatt Jones Jr., the current administrator of Precious Blood, will serve as deacon. A reception will follow the Mass.

"Our two parish communities began joining together for Mass once a month in April," said Deacon Jones. "We started to combine our ministries and then surveyed our parishioners about the possibility of merging. They liked the idea and helped us select the new name, St. Peter Claver—he was a Jesuit priest from Spain who ministered physically and spiritually to slaves when they arrived in Cartagena, Colombia."

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