

MICHAEL C. BARBER, S.J.
BISHOP OF OAKLAND



2121 HARRISON STREET,
OAKLAND, CA 94612
510.267.8316

July 8, 2022

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph Basilica,

For some time the Diocesan Planning Board has been looking at how to best serve the Catholics of Alameda. The diocese clustered, then merged, St. Philip Neri and St. Albert the Great parishes in 2007. We did this to keep both churches open when faced with declining Mass attendance and fewer priests. This joining of resources has been very successful for the Catholics of Eastern Alameda.

Now it's time to make a plan to sustain the Catholic families of Western Alameda. For some years St. Barnabas parish has been particularly challenged by declining Mass attendance and not being able to meet the parish's financial responsibilities.

In order to keep St. Barnabas church open for worship, I have decided to cluster St. Barnabas and St. Joseph Basilica parishes. When Father Dana Michaels retires as pastor of St. Barnabas on August 1st, the work of creating a successful cluster will begin. I am appointing Fr. Mario Rizzo to serve as the parish administrator for St. Barnabas, while remaining the spiritual leader of St. Joseph's Basilica.

I am appointing Fr. Kenneth Nobrega to serve as the parochial vicar at St. Joseph's and St. Barnabas. Under their leadership I ask the parish councils and finance councils to meet to decide the best path forward in terms of shared resources, practical Mass times, combined ministries, joint religious education classes, and united consultative bodies. Fr. Nobrega will reside at St. Barnabas Rectory, but serve both parishes. I am particularly grateful to Father Mario for taking on the additional leadership responsibility for two parishes.

Although our diocese is composed of many parishes, we are one family in Christ. Together as one people of God we can make this work. But we will need everyone's support. We need to grow our parishes, invite people to join us, hand on the Faith to our children, and make our Masses occasions where people find and fall in love with Jesus Christ. St. Paul said "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." So can we.

I know I can count on your support.

With the assurance of my prayers and blessings,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Michael Barber s.j." with a small cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, S.J.
Bishop of Oakland

For the greater glory of God