



# St. John Paul II Parish Family

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## Video #1 – Introduction - What’s Happening and Canon Law

Over the next few months, our community will be going through the process of “canonical unification” or becoming “one canonical parish.” You may be asking what does this mean, and why are we doing this? Aren’t we already a parish family?

First, it’s important to know that the Catholic Church has something called “Canon Law” which is a complete legal system that governs the Church and all of Her members. It helps us to know what we are and aren’t permitted to do, how we can go about accomplishing the things that we can do, what happens if these laws are broken, and it spells out the various rights and obligations of the people in the Church. Canon Law gives us clear answers to questions that can come up as we engage in our work together as the people of God. Just to give a few examples, it answers questions like: Can a priest/deacon demand that I pay them to have my child baptized? (No). Does everyone have to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday? (No – if you are under 18 or over 59 years old, then you do not have to fast). How old do you have to be in order to be ordained a priest? (At least 25 years old). In short, Canon Law is a legal system that governs life in the Catholic Church.

So when we speak about “canonical unification” or becoming “one canonical parish,” what we mean is that we are beginning a process of legally becoming a single parish. Right now, the St. John Paul II Parish Family is legally three parishes – Our Lady of Good Hope (OLGH), St. Henry (SH), and St. Mary of the Assumption (SM). These three legal entities are currently sharing one pastor and are unified in working together to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Through the process of canonical unification, we are hoping that these three legal entities will come together into one legal entity; to be a single parish.

In these articles and videos, we are hoping to explain the canonical/legal process by which this happens; what rights you have before, during, and after this process; what will and will not happen as a result of this process; and we will be seeking your feedback, which will be shared with the Archbishop, throughout this process. There will be more said on this later, but for now, please know that this process will not result in the closing of any of our churches or campuses. In fact, as you will see, this process of becoming one canonical parish should not feel like a change at all. This is because we are already working so well together as a parish family, and this process should feel like a celebration of the incredible work that we have already done together. I have said this before and I will say it again – I am incredibly proud to be a part of this parish family, and I’ve been inspired by the great work that we are all doing together. My hope is that this step in the process of Beacons of Light, this step of becoming a single canonical (i.e. legal) parish, will lead to greater collaboration in the future so that you can be better served by your parish and so that we can all together more effectively serve our wider community.