



THE NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

21 November 2020

The Feast of the Presentation of the BVM

Dearest Brothers in the Episcopacy,

On this day, the Feast of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, we commemorate the event which took place when the then three-year old Mary was presented in the Temple by her parents Saints Joachim and Anne, in fulfillment of a vow of gratitude to God for granting the elderly couple the blessing of a child, for Anne was both elderly and barren. According to ancient tradition, Mary was raised in the Temple until she attained the age of twelve, when she was then placed into the guardianship of St Joseph, later to become his wife. This sacred and honored event parallels many of the life-events of Samuel and his barren elderly mother Hannah, and of St John the Baptist and his mother Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. In all three of these cases the birth of a child to an elderly and barren mother was seen and interpreted as a sign of God's great favor and grace, all in preparation for a major ministry for God.

On Sunday, 29 November 2020, Holy Mother Church will begin a new Ecclesiastical Year, a year of renewed commitment and devotion to the practice of our Catholic Faith and a renewed commitment to zealously work for the advancement and expansion of the Kingdom of God here on earth.....His Holy Church.

St John in his Gospel account of Jesus' Farewell Discourse (John 17) recounts Our Lord's wish that we all may be one as He and the Father are One. Psalm 133 also speaks to us of brethren dwelling together in unity thus outlining God's design for us.

In 1916, when Archbishop Rudolph de Landas Berghes and Bishop Carmel Henry Carfora merged their respective church jurisdictions to form the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, it required a willingness and a true religious humility to put aside personal goals, preferences, prejudices, aspirations, and ambitions, etc. to work for the common good of the fledgling North American Old Roman Catholic Church. Fortunately for us, and for the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, these two hierarchs and their clergy were truly men of God imbued with a truly Catholic vision for the mission and ministry of the Church.

As has been true since the dawn of mankind, and even before that, Lucifer, the "Father of Deceit and the Sower of Dissension", began his campaign in earnest against this his newest enemy, the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, in his battle against God for the souls of men and their eternal salvation. Lucifer knew then and knows now, that if he reveals himself for who he truly is, mankind will reject him, and thus he uses other men to serve as his agents for sowing the seeds of distrust, duplicity, division and

dissension in the Church, by using their own ambitions, aspirations and desires for self-aggrandizement to bring down the Church by schisms and divisions.

While Lucifer made significant inroads to accomplish his goal, he has failed to entirely extinguish and destroy the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, its mission or its ministry. To his great consternation, Lucifer's ultimate plan has failed because, while the North American Old Roman Catholic Church has indeed experienced numerous schisms and divisions leading to the apostasy of many clergy in its 104 year long history, two significant bodies remained faithful in name, faith, tradition and praxis despite their separation and isolation from each other, these two bodies being: the parent body today identified as the North American Old Roman Catholic Church Primatial See of Nova Terra, and the other being the North American Old Roman Catholic Church - Archdiocese of California. Again, to add to the further consternation of Lucifer, after a period of eighty years of needless separation, both jurisdictions have now sought to reunite with each other, both of those jurisdictions being shepherded today by Hierarchs who replicate the virtues of our original founders, Archbishop de Landas Berghes and Bishop Carfora, in their Faith, Devotion, Dedication, Vision, Zeal, Humility, Commitment and Determination.

For the greater part of the past year, both Archbishops have been in unceasing and rigorous prayer and dialog with each other, exploring the way in which they together could lead their two respective jurisdictions to embrace the original unity that created the North American Old Roman Catholic Church in 1916. Invoking the guidance of the Holy Trinity and aspiring to achieve the unity desired by Our Lord Jesus Christ as found in the Gospel of St John (John 17: 21), We, Archbishop Edward James Ford, T.O.R. and Archbishop Joseph Andrew Vellone, on 29 September 2020, being the Feast of St Michael and All Angels, executed a Solemn Concordat of Reunification, duly signed and witnessed, between our two jurisdictions. The effective date of this Concordat of Reunification is the First Sunday of Advent, 29 November 2020. The following provisions agreed to in the Concordat are binding from that day forward upon all clergy of both jurisdictions regardless of rank, office, role or position. From that day forward we will walk together once again as brothers in the unity of a single North American Old Roman Catholic Church as envisioned, conceived, enacted and established by Archbishop de Landas Berghes and Bishop Carfora in 1916, thus restoring the North American Old Roman Catholic Church to its original state of union on earth as it is in heaven.

PROVISIONS

1. All ecclesiastical structures of the uniting jurisdictions will remain as they currently exist with only minor adjustments.
2. All dioceses, clergy, parishes and faithful will remain in place as currently existing.
3. The affiliated dioceses of the uniting jurisdictions will remain subject to their current Metropolitans.
4. All ecclesiastical appointments and assignments will remain as they currently exist, but future appointments, assignments and elections will be made in accordance with the Constitution and Canon Laws of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.
5. The Archdiocese of New York-New England will constitute the Metropolitan See of the Eastern Province of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church and the Archdiocese of California will constitute the Metropolitan See of the Western Province of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

6. As initially established in 1917 by Archbishop de Landas Berghes and Archbishop Carfora, there is and has always been but a single Primatial See for the whole of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church. Whereas as the See of Nova Terra is the sole, continual, and uninterrupted continuation of that historic See, the See of Nova Terra will continue as the Primatial See of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church and the current Primate of Nova Terra will continue as the Primate of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, subject to the terms and limitations delineated in the Constitution and Canon Laws of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

7. All of the current and future bishops in good canonical standing of the uniting jurisdictions will constitute a single College of Bishops of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church with equal status and rights. All of the current and future bishops exercising Ordinary jurisdiction of the uniting jurisdictions will constitute a single Sacred Consistory of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

8. In order to facilitate the knowledge of and the application of the canonical process and procedures within the reunited church, the current Constitution and Codex of Canon Law of the Primatial See of Nova Terra is designated for exclusive use and with full canonical authority within the united jurisdictions of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church subject to a 12 month period of review to allow time for all of the clergy and for lay delegates of the uniting jurisdictions to read and thoroughly study the same and to submit any comments, questions, or suggestions for revision, all to be considered, debated, and ultimately voted upon at a General Synod to be held two years hence from the effective date of the reunion of the two jurisdictions.

9. Both Metropolitan Sees and all of their affiliated dioceses will be represented with their own pages on the current website of the Primatial See of Nova Terra as the official website of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, which will be updated and redesigned. The various Provinces, dioceses, parishes, missions and religious communities are also encouraged to maintain their own individual websites as well. It is highly encouraged that there be mutual links between these individual websites and the official North American Old Roman Catholic Church website. All churches and clergy of the reunited church are encouraged to freely use the coat of arms of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church to identify their ministry, parishes and dioceses as part of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

10. All of the clergy, bishops, Ordinaries within the united church are encouraged to make full use all of the resources of the Primatial See of Nova Terra. We heartily encourage the use of Saint Francis of Assisi Theological Seminary as a regular and common resource for the clerical education of all of the clergy of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church as it constitutes the contemporary version of the original Saint Francis Seminary established by Archbishop Carfora in 1919. We also encourage clergy throughout the North American Old Roman Catholic Church to contribute their talents and knowledge by serving as instructors in the seminary.

11. All clergy in good canonical standing within any diocese of the uniting jurisdictions will enjoy equal status, rights and privileges within their clerical order and in any assignment by their respective Ordinaries.

12. All clergy of the reunited church possessing canonical faculties from any bishop of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church will enjoy a reciprocity of canonical faculties within any other diocese of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church as long as they are in good canonical standing with their own Ordinary, according to the Constitution and Canons of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

13. Membership on any and all of the Standing Committees and Commissions of the Primatial See of Nova Terra or on the Synodical Council of the Primatial See of Nova Terra will be drawn from clergy of all of the dioceses of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

14. All parishes, clergy and faithful from all of the dioceses of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church will be represented at all General Synods and Special Synods of the Primatial See of Nova Terra with equal status and rights as stated in the Constitution and Canons of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

It is with great joy that we also announce that in this year of new beginnings, we also welcome into union with the North American Old Roman Catholic Church the jurisdiction of the Infant Jesus of Prague with their clergy, parishes and faithful under the episcopal leadership of Archbishop John G Olivares and Bishop Stephen G Rindahl of San Antonio, Texas.

We also with great joy welcome Archbishop Mauricio Torres Moreno, Bishop Wilson Manuel Acosta and Bishop Michael Marie Ondigui of the Missionaries of Saint Paul, together with all of their clergy, parishes, religious and faithful in Colombia, South America and in Cameroon, Africa.

Overtures for union with the North American Old Roman Catholic Church have also been opened with clergy in Brazil, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal and France, who all look to our Church for the stability, foundations, faith and formation in Old Roman Catholicism which for 104 years has been the hallmark of our Church. Let us pray to God that a successful and full incorporation of these churches and their clergy will bear fruit during the year of 2021.

May we all offer up to Almighty God, our fervent prayers of thanksgiving that He has graciously preserved our Church despite all of the trials and persecutions from within and from without, which it has endured during these past 104 years, and that He has now showered us with His blessings, His grace, and His favor as we now progress forward in unity, strength, zeal, fidelity, faith and commitment for the North American Old Roman Catholic Church and for the growth and expansion of her work in the Vineyard of the Lord, "...well done good and faithful servants... enter into the joy of your Lord."

LAUS DEO

- ✘ **Edward J. Ford, T.O.R.** *North American Old Roman Catholic Church, Primatial See of Nova Terra*
- ✘ **Joseph Andrew Vellone** *North American Old Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of California*
- ✘ **John Gabriel Olivares** *North American Old Roman Catholic Church, Jurisdiction of the Infant Jesus of Prague*
- ✘ **Mauricio Torres Moreno** *North American Old Roman Catholic Church, Missionaries of Saint Paul*

Nota Bene

Due to the current restrictions on travel and the various state imposed lockdowns as a result of the resurgence of Covid-19, this letter has been "signed" by the verbal agreement of the bishops concerned and the inclusion of their names and jurisdictions on this letter. This is an Official Letter and communication from the above Hierarchs to the Church.