



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECREE

Merger of Saint Brigid Parish, West Hartford (Elmwood), Connecticut, with Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, West Hartford, Connecticut and with Saint Helena Parish, West Hartford, Connecticut, that is, a merger/extinctive union type I (cc. 121 and 515 §2).

Whereas, Saint Brigid Parish was established in on August 4, 1919, and had the destination of being the first Catholic parish in West Hartford; Saint Mark the Evangelist was created in 1941, on the border between West Hartford and Hartford, in response to a rising population of French-Canadians who had come to the area seeking jobs in local defence industries; and Saint Helena was established in 1966, in southwestern West Hartford;

Whereas, Saint Brigid and Saint Helena were “linked” on June 30, 2009, and they share a pastor;

Whereas, from 2010 to 2015, there was a decrease in the number of registered households, with 14.5% decrease at Saint Mark the Evangelist; 10% decrease at Saint Brigid Parish; and 42.9% decrease at Saint Helena;

Whereas, the above decrease in the number of registered Catholic households has brought about a sharp decline in the sacramental activities of the three parishes; for instance from 2010 to 2015, there was 26.7% decrease in all sacramental activities at the Saint Mark the Evangelist; 15% at Saint Brigid; and 34.6% at Saint Helena;

Whereas, these parishes have has served the Catholic faithful since 1919 and during that time, many people have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and have received the sacraments of the Church in their respective parish communities. Now, in an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life, with concern for the best stewardship of resources and the right of the People of God to receive assistance from the Church, especially the Word of God, spiritual sustenance and the sacraments, it is necessary to make new provisions for the spiritual care of the parishioners of these parishes;

Whereas, having asked parishioners to make known their needs and desires, having received the recommendations of the Pastoral Planning Committee, in line with *Stewards for Tomorrow*, under the careful direction of the Office of Pastoral Planning, which reviewed the recommendations of the parishes involved, and having consulted the Presbyteral Council on May 1, 2017, in accord with canons 121 and 515, §2-3 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law,

I, the undersigned, in virtue of my authority as Archbishop of Hartford,

hereby

DECREE:

1. That the territorial parishes of Merger of Saint Brigid Parish, West Hartford (Elmwood), Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, West Hartford, and Saint Helena Parish, West Hartford, be merged to form one territorial parish, effective on June 29, 2017.
2. The new entity will be titled as Saint Gianna (Beretta Molla) Parish, with three church buildings, that is, Saint Brigid Church, Saint Mark the Evangelist Church, and Saint Helena Church;
3. That Saint Brigid Church premises assume the administration of the merged parish and make suitable provision for the faithful of the merged parishes providing for their pastoral care and meeting their pastoral needs. The consolidated and merged parish shall include the membership of Saint Brigid Parish, Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, and Saint Helena Parish and the new boundaries of Saint Gianna shall include the territorial boundaries of the aforementioned Parishes.

This decision is based upon a number of factors, among which are the decline in the Catholic worshipping community at these Parishes, the reasonable proximity of the worship communities and the respective church edifices, the desire to avoid duplication of services and the increasing expenses associated with necessary repairs and maintenance to aging structures (for instance the estimated net parish operating deficit is minus \$184,595 for Saint Mark the Evangelist, minus \$155,395 for Saint Brigid, and minus \$40,080 for Saint Helena), the rise in revenue when merged is \$1,222,422, the revamping of the spiritual welfare of the parish communities, the spread of the Gospel, the promotion of unity among the People of God, the enhancement of collaborative ministry, and the better utilization of available priest personnel.

The parish registers of the former Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish and the former Saint Helena Parish containing the records and registers of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage and deaths along with parish records and historical documents are to be forwarded to Saint Brigid Church premises where they are to be faithfully preserved and maintained in accord with canon 535, §§1-5. Any registers, records and historical documents not needed for continued administration of aforementioned parishes are to be forwarded to the Archdiocesan Archives.

According to the norm of canon 121, all assets and liabilities, whether movable or immovable, of the former Parishes, will become the assets and liabilities of the juridic person of Saint Gianna. In all financial matters involving wills, trusts and foundations to maintain the patrimony of the three parishes, the intention of the founders and benefactors is to be respected. Any acquired rights are to be safeguarded.

The effect of the merger (*unio extinctiva*) of Saint Brigid Parish, Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, and Saint Helena Parish is the termination of the independent juridic personalities of Saint Brigid Parish, Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, and Saint Helena Parish. Thus, they will no longer be subjects of obligations and rights in canon law corresponding to its nature as a juridic person, nor will they be capable of acquiring, retaining, administering, or alienating temporal goods according to the norm of law.

This decree becomes effective June 29th, 2017, prior to which the substance of it is to be communicated to parishioners at the aforementioned parishes, including the display in an appropriate place so that parishioners can read it as they enter or exit the Church. It will also be available on the website, *stewardsfortomorrow.org*. Canonical recourse may be made within the peremptory time limit of ten (10) business days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law (c. 1734 §2).

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, on the 2nd day of May in the Year of Our Lord 2017.



Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford



Reverend Ryan M. Lerner
Chancellor