



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR  
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

**DECREE**

Merging **Saint Joseph Parish** in Canaan, Connecticut with **Saint Mary Parish** in Lakeville, Connecticut, and with **Immaculate Conception Parish** in Norfolk, Connecticut, to form one new juridic entity titled, Saint Martin of Tours (merger/extinctive union type I (cc. 121 and 515 §2).

**Whereas**, Saint Joseph Parish was erected a parish on May 20, 1920, to serve Catholics who worked in the iron and lime industries; Saint Mary Parish was established in February 1875, to serve Catholics who had settled in Lakeville (Salisbury) as early as the 1840s; and Immaculate Conception Parish was established on August 10, 1889;

**Whereas**, during that time, many people have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and received the sacraments of the Church in these parishes. Now, in an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in the Litchfield Deanery, of the Waterbury Vicariate, 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, the sacraments and the continuation of ministries, it is necessary to make new provisions for the spiritual care of the parishioners of these parishes;

**Whereas**, from 2010 to 2015, there was a decrease in the number of registered households, with 3.1% decrease at Saint Joseph Parish; 2.8% increase at Saint Mary Parish, and 15% decrease at Immaculate Conception Parish;

**Whereas**, the above decrease in the number of registered Catholic households has brought about declines at two parishes, at Saint Joseph a decline of 15.8% and at Immaculate Conception, a decline of 21.7%; however, there was an increase of 40.5% of sacramental activities at Saint Mary Parish;

**Whereas**, Joseph Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish were linked on July 3, 2004 and share a pastor; the two parishes have already found some success with a joint pastoral work, sharing of resources with regards to the religious education programs and office, as well as other resources; thus, adding Saint Mary Parish will be an asset to the new parish;

**Therefore**, after having asked parishioners to make known their needs and desires, through the pastoral planning process, in consultation with lay leadership and the local pastors, the Pastoral Planning Committee, the Office of Pastoral Planning and having heard the Presbyteral Council on May 1, 2017, in accord with canons 121, 515 §2 §3 and 518 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law,

I hereby

**DECREE**

the following:

1. Merge Saint Joseph Parish in Canaan with Saint Mary Parish in Lakeville and with Immaculate Conception Parish to form one territorial parish. The union shall take effect on June 29, 2017.
2. The new parish shall include the membership of the former Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Mary Parish, and Immaculate Conception Parish.
3. The existing church edifice of each of the former parishes will remain the sites of worship for the new parish community, until such time that the pastor, with the advice of his parish pastoral and finance councils, and with my consent, determines otherwise.
4. The boundaries of the new parish will encompass the entire territory of the former Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Mary Parish, and Immaculate Conception Parish, including the two cemeteries located at the extinct parishes of Saint Joseph and Saint Mary.
5. Establish that the name of the new territorial parish be known effective June 29, 2017, as the Parish of Saint Martin of Tours. The name of the current Saint Joseph Church, Saint Mary Church, and Immaculate Conception Church edifices shall remain unchanged.
6. Establish that, in accord with canon 519, a pastor will be appointed to foster the pastoral care of Parish of Saint Martin of Tours.

This decision is based upon a number of components, among them the spiritual welfare of the parish communities, the spread of the Gospel, the fostering of unity of the People of God in the new Litchfield Deanery, the enhancement of collaborative ministry, and the best use of available financial resources and priest personnel. For instance, the estimated parish operating revenue is estimated to grow to \$658, 217.

All parish registers containing the records of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage, and deaths preserved at Saint Mary Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish shall be transferred to the premises of Saint Joseph Church where they will be faithfully preserved in accord with canon 535, §§1-5.

According to the norm of canon 121, all assets, whether movable or immovable, and all liabilities of former Saint Joseph Parish, former Saint Mary Parish, and former Immaculate Conception Parish upon this merger, will become the assets and liabilities of Parish of Saint Martin of Tours. Furthermore, possession of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Mary Parish, and Immaculate Conception Parish shall be transferred to Parish of Saint Martin of Tours and shall be administered in accordance with canons 1189 and 1292.

The merger of Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Mary Parish, and Immaculate Conception Parish will terminate the juridic personality of Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Mary Parish, and Immaculate Conception Parish, which they now possess by law. Therefore, Saint Joseph Parish, Saint Mary Parish, and Immaculate Conception Parish shall be no longer subject in canon law of obligations and rights corresponding to their nature as juridic persons. In addition, the aforementioned parishes shall be capable no longer of acquiring, retaining, administering, and 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