



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECREE

ON THE MERGER OF THE PARISH OF SAINT PAUL, GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT, WITH SAINT AUGUSTINE, SOUTH GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT

WHEREAS, “the same concern for souls should be the basis for determining or reconsidering the erection or suppression of parishes and any other changes of this kind which the bishop is empowered to undertake on his own authority” (*Christus Dominus*, no. 32);

WHEREAS, the parish is “pre-eminent among all the other communities present in his Diocese, for which the Bishop has primary responsibility: it is with the parishes above all that he must be concerned” (St John Paul II, post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Pastores gregis*, October 16, 2003, n. 45) and whereas the parish “remains the fundamental unit in the daily life of the Diocese” (*ibid.*);

WHEREAS, canon 515 § provides that it is only for the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or alter parishes, willingly desiring in all things to promote the greater glory of God and desirous of providing for the good of souls;

WHEREAS, the Bishop should proceed, after consulting the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, to alter territorial boundaries, to divide parishes that are too large, to merge small parishes, to establish new parishes or non-territorial centres for pastoral service in the community (cf. Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores*, February 22, 2004, n. 214);

WHEREAS, after my appointment as Archbishop in 2013, a multi-year pastoral planning process, *Stewards for Tomorrow*, was undertaken to continue strengthening and enhancing parish life in the Archdiocese of Hartford and to assist the archdiocese in serving its Catholic faithful most effectively, and;

WHEREAS, this pastoral planning process, which had its beginnings in 2014, sought the input and suggestions of clergy, parish leader leadership and parishioners;

WHEREAS, the initial work consisted of surveying the parishioners of every parish of the archdiocese; meeting with priests, deacons, and religious throughout the archdiocese; consulting with the archdiocesan pastoral council; and reviewing the recommendations of the Pastoral Planning Committee;

WHEREAS, the existing parish structure of the archdiocese was largely established between the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries;

WHEREAS, radical changes and shifts in demographics have occurred over the past decades, including a move away from the urban center into the suburbs, together with a substantial immigration of new population groups;

WHEREAS, the archdiocese faces a decline in the number of available priests;

WHEREAS, the two parishes are confronted with a declining number of faithful attending on a regular basis Sunday Mass, a 12.8% decrease from 2010-2015;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned parishes have seen a sharp decrease, 35.2%, of sacramental activities from 2010 to 2015;

WHEREAS, the changing situation places a financial burden on both parishes, which, if the two parishes were combined, would transform into an estimated net surplus of \$69,708, thereby avoiding the need to cover deficits with archdiocesan loans;

WHEREAS, the parishes of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine were already linked in 2001 and currently share a pastor, and a recommendation to merge was based upon the complementarity of the two parishes, their proximity, and the pastoral need for intensive collaboration and the need for the care of the souls;

After having heard the Presbyteral Council on May 1, 2017, therefore, I, the undersigned Archbishop of Hartford, hereby

DECREE

as follows:


1. The parishes of Saint Paul in Glastonbury and Saint Augustine in South Glastonbury be merged. The name of the newly merged parish will be the parish of Saints Isidore and Maria. The boundaries of the newly merged parish will be same as the boundaries of the former parishes. The parish will have two church buildings: Saint Paul Church and Saint Augustine Church, including the cemetery of the extinct Parish of Saint Augustine.


2. All members of the originating parishes shall now become members of the new parish, provided they have domicile or quasi-domicile in the newly merged parish.
3. All historical documents and sacramental registers containing records of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials will be hitherto conveyed to and preserved in the offices of the newly merged parish at the premises of Saint Paul Church, where they shall be faithfully preserved according to canon 535, 1° - 5° of the Code of Canon Law.
4. All ecclesiastical goods of the originating parishes are to belong to the newly merged parish. Likewise, all liabilities of the originating parishes are now transferred to the newly merged parish.

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).

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

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


Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford


Reverend Ryan M. Lerner
Chancellor