



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECREE

In Nomine Domini. Amen.

**THIS DECREE CONCERNS THE MERGER OF THE PARISHES OF
SAINT JOSEPH IN NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT AND SAINT PETER IN
NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT.**

WHEREAS, Saint Joseph Parish was established as territorial parish on April 9, 1896, to cater to the spiritual needs of Catholics in the South end of New Britain, and Saint Peter was established on July 1, 1890, for spiritual needs of New Britain German Catholics, and after 1900, the then pastor, Reverend Charles Coppens, received a delegation of New Britain's French-Canadian Catholics, who sought membership in Saint Peter Parish. Thus, in 1913, Saint Peter Parish was officially designated by Bishop John J. Nilan to serve the needs of the both the Germans and French immigrants in New Britain;

WHEREAS, the parishes were linked on July 30, 2009, and currently share a pastor;

WHEREAS, from 2010 to 2015, Saint Joseph Parish saw a sharp decline in registered households, 26.8%, and Saint Peter a decline of 15%; and in the same time period there was total decrease in sacramental activities at both parishes of 15.9%;

WHEREAS, the parishes share an ecumenical outreach ministry to people in local shelters to provide their basic needs;

WHEREAS, the parishioners who have domicile and quasi-domicile within the parishes attend the different liturgical services at either Saint Joseph Parish and Saint Peter Parish;

WHEREAS, the merger of the parishes would allow the parish that would result from the merger to better administer personnel, financial, and material resources and thus facilitate the mission of the Church in the territory currently served by two parishes and, for 2018, see an estimated net surplus of \$50, 645;

WHEREAS, the merger of parishes would offer expanded services and opportunities for spiritual growth to the parishioners of the currently existing parishes while eliminating inefficient and counterproductive duplication of services;

WHEREAS, from the inception of the Pastoral Planning Process, the current pastor has consulted the lay leadership, that is, Finance Councils, Pastoral Councils, and the parishioners, and informed them of the advantages of a merged entity;

WHEREAS, the parishes are expanding due to changes in demographics, and would cater to the spiritual needs of the parishioners more effectively if they are merged;

WHEREAS, the merger of the parishes would allow for a Mass schedule which would encourage fuller participation in the liturgy;

WHEREAS, only the Diocesan Bishop can significantly alter a parish in his jurisdiction according to the prescriptions of c. 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law; and in accord with prescriptions of c. 121, having judged that sufficient just causes are present and that the good of souls will not thereby be impaired, and having heard the parishioners of both parishes through parish leadership with input from the parishes at large, having received the recommendation of the Pastoral Planning Committee, which reviewed the recommendations of the parishes party to this decree, and under the careful direction of the Vicar for Pastoral Planning, and having consulted the Presbyteral Council on May 1, 2017, in accordance with c. 515 §2,

THEREFORE, I hereby DECREE that:

The territorial Parish of Saint Joseph and the ethnic Parish of Saint Peter are to be merged, and from the merger form a new parish, to be named Divine Providence Parish, with two church buildings: Saint Joseph Church and Saint Peter Church in New Britain, Connecticut.

The merger is an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in Hartford 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 and the sacraments. Saint Joseph Parish and Saint Peter Parish, as separate juridic entities, will cease to exist. All Catholics having domicile or quasi-domicile within the current boundaries of the aforementioned parishes are hereby considered members of Divine Providence Parish and, as such, are entrusted to the care of one pastor. The territory of Divine Providence shall comprise of the territory of the former Saint Joseph Parish, including all Catholics who belonged to the ethnic parish of Saint Peter. The rich legacies and histories of Saint Joseph and Saint Peter Parish will be promoted and honored at Saint Divine Providence Parish. Together, all of the parishioners are encouraged to unite with the newly merged parish through the union with Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament.


The intentions of the founders and donors regarding the temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to the extinct Parish of Saint Joseph and the extinct Parish of Saint Peter, as well as the acquired rights, shall be honored and respected. In addition, the temporal goods, patrimonial rights, and the obligations of each of the extinct parishes shall be assumed by Divine Providence, in accordance with the norm of law (c. 121).

All the parish and sacrament records of the extinct Parish of Saint Joseph and the extinct Parish of Saint Peter are to be properly preserved and safeguarded in the premises of Saint Joseph Church in New Britain, in accordance with the norm of law (cc. 535 §§1-5).

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, this 2nd day of May, 2017.


Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford


Reverend Ryan M. Lerner
Chancellor