



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR  
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

## DECREE

### *In nomine Domini*

*This decree concerns the merger/extinctive union type I (cc. 121 and 515 §2) of Saint James in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and Saint Elizabeth Seton Parish, also in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and the conferral of the title of "Saint Josephine Bakhita" to the newly created parish in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. The principal motive is to provide more suitably for the good of souls (Christus Dominus no. 32).*

**WHEREAS**, Saint James Parish was erected as a territorial parish on November 30, 1945, and Saint Elizabeth Seton Parish was established as the first "designated ministry" in Connecticut, whereby in accordance to canon 517 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the priest, the deacon and a pastoral minister shared equal responsibility. The designated ministers were charged to "find a place to say Mass and see who comes." Their commission was the southern portion of Saint James Parish, which had grown rapidly as the sole Catholic Church of Rocky Hill. Consequently, the parish of Saint Elizabeth Seton was formally erected as a parish on October 13, 1989;

**WHEREAS**, the Suburban Hartford Deanery, wherein Saint James Parish and Saint Elizabeth Seton Parish are located, includes twenty-seven (13) small-to-medium-sized churches serving a similar demographic;

**WHEREAS**, the two parishes are located in the same municipality, sharing the same school system and socio-economic composition;

**WHEREAS**, if the two parishes could combine their religious education program (child and adult), share staff, use one central office and communication apparatus, and share events and programs, they could function more effectively;

**WHEREAS**, the finances and pastoral and material resources of the two parishes are more or less similar so that when merged they will be strengthened for the mission of evangelization in the Hartford Vicariate (for 2015 the total offertory for Saint James Parish was \$575,158, and for Saint Elizabeth Seton \$437,447; if combined, the estimated Church operating revenue for the merged entity is \$1,309,893 with a deficit of a mere \$3,772;

**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 Parish of Saint James and the Parish of Saint Elizabeth Seton are to be merged, and from the merger form a new parish, to be titled Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish in Rocky Hill, with two church buildings: Saint James Church and Saint Elizabeth Seton Church.

The merger is an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in the new Hartford and Suburban Hartford Deanery, 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 James Parish and Saint Elizabeth Seton 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 Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish and, as such, are entrusted to the care of one pastor. The rich legacies and histories of Saint James Parish and Saint Elizabeth Seton Parish will be promoted and honored at Saint Josephine Bakhita 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 James and the extinct Parish of Saint Elizabeth Seton, 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 Saint Josephine Bakhita in accordance with the norm of law (c. 121). The Parish of Saint Josephine Bakhita shall comprise all the territories of the former Parishes of Saint James and Saint Elizabeth Seton.

All the parish and sacrament records, including historical records of the extinct Parish of Saint James and the extinct Parish of Saint Elizabeth Seton are to be properly preserved and safeguarded on the premises of Saint James Church in Rocky Hill, 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.

*+ Leonard P. Blair*

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Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair  
Archbishop of Hartford



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Reverend Ryan M. Lerner  
Chancellor