



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECREE

In nomine Domini. Amen.

This decree concerns the merger/extinctive union type I (cc. 121 and 515 §2) of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Washington Depot, Connecticut, and Saint Patrick Mission in Roxbury, Connecticut. The principal motive being “the concern for souls as 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, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish was erected as a territorial parish on April, 1 1908, after the mission had been the pastoral responsibility of Bridgeport and Norwalk. In 1851, Washington’s few Catholics moved to Danbury and then to Newtown’s jurisdiction in July 1859. By May 1871, Saint Francis Xavier parish, New Milford, acquired Washington Depot as a mission. Modest construction began in 1889, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help was dedicated on September 21, 1890. Saint Patrick Mission was established in 1885. Initially, Roxbury was successively affiliated with a number of pastoral jurisdictions in the 19th century, including Bridgeport, Danbury, and Newtown. In 1871, when Saint Francis Xavier parish of New Milford assumed the Roxbury mission, the Michael J. Pickett home on Painter Hill Road hosted Masses. As Irish Catholics migrated to Roxbury for work at the local quarries in the 1880s, the erection of mission church on Church Street commenced. When Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish was created in 1908, the mission passed to the care of Washington Depot pastors.

WHEREAS, Canon 515 §1, defines a parish as a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop; and Canon 516 §1 maintains that, unless the law provides otherwise, a quasi-parish is equivalent to a parish; a quasi-parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful in a particular church, entrusted to a priest as its proper pastor but not yet erected as a parish because of particular circumstances. Thus, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Washington Depot is defined as a parish and Saint Patrick Mission in Roxbury is defined as a quasi-parish;

WHEREAS, the Suburban Waterbury Deanery wherein Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish and Saint Patrick Mission are located includes eleven (11) small-to-medium-sized parishes serving a similar demographic;

WHEREAS, since 1908, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish and Saint Patrick Mission have shared a Pastor;

WHEREAS, the parish and the quasi-parish are located in adjacent municipalities with similar school systems and socio-economic compositions;

WHEREAS, the parish and the quasi-parish have one website and one bulletin and share offices, events and programs;

WHEREAS, the finances and pastoral and material resources of the parish and the quasi-parish are more or less similar so that when merged they will be strengthened for the mission of evangelization in the Hartford Vicariate; for instance, in 2015, Our Lady of Perpetual Help had annual offertory of \$100,051 and Saint Patrick Mission had \$78,808;

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, 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 Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the Quasi-Parish of Saint Patrick are to be merged and from the merger form a new parish, named “Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish,” with two church buildings: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Washington Depot and Saint Patrick Church in Roxbury, Connecticut.

The merger is an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in the new Waterbury and Suburban Waterbury 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 Patrick Mission, as a separate juridic entity, will cease to exist. All Catholics having domicile or quasi-domicile within the current boundaries of the aforementioned parishes are hereby considered members of the new parish and as such are entrusted to the care of one pastor.

The boundaries of the newly merged parish will be same as the boundaries of the former parish and quasi-parish, including the cemetery located at the extinct quasi-parish of Saint Patrick Mission. The rich legacy and history of the former entities will be promoted and honored at Our Lady of Perpetual Help 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 and acquired rights proper to the aforementioned parishes 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 Our Lady of Perpetual Help in accordance with the norm of law (c. 121).

All the parish and sacrament records of the aforementioned parishes are to be properly preserved and safeguarded at premises of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 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 preemptory 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