



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECRETUM
In nomine Domini

This decree concerns the merger/extinctive union type I (cc. 121 and 515 §2) of Saint Gabriel Parish in Windsor, Connecticut, and Saint Joseph Parish in Windsor (Poquonock), Connecticut, and the conferral of the title of “Saint Damien of Molokai”, to the newly created parish in Windsor, Connecticut. The principal motive is to provide more suitably for the good of souls (*Christus Dominus* no. 32).

WHEREAS, from 1852 to 1892, the section of Windsor now encompassed by Saint Gabriel was the responsibility of Saint Mary Parish in Windsor Locks; in 1892, Saint Gabriel passed to the jurisdiction of Saint Joseph Parish in Poquonock and was raised to parish status in 1921, and Saint Joseph was established as a parish in August, 1892, initially serving the first Catholics in the Poquonock section of Windsor, who were mainly Irish immigrants seeking work at local mills. In fact, Poquonock’s prosperity depended upon both water and immigrants to keep the mills functioning;

WHEREAS, the Farmington Valley Deanery, wherein Saint Joseph Parish and Saint Gabriel Parish are located, includes twelve (12) small-to-medium-sized Churches including other parishes from nearby deaneries serving a similar demographic;

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2014, the parishes of Saint Gabriel and Saint Joseph in Windsor were linked and share a pastor;

WHEREAS, from 2010 to 2015, the number of registered household decreased from 1,550 to 644 at Saint Gabriel Parish and from 947 to 670 at Saint Joseph Parish, which led to the decline in sacramental activities by 37.4% at Saint Gabriel Parish and a slight increase of 2.1% at Saint Joseph Parish.

WHEREAS, the two parishes are located in the same municipalities, sharing the same socio-economic composition;

WHEREAS, the two parishes have one religious education program (child and adult) and share events and programs, staff, and many ministries which include members from both parishes and serve those who live within the boundaries of either parish;

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 instance, the average annual offertory for Saint Gabriel Parish was \$418,578 and \$379,727 for Saint Joseph Parish;

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 accordance 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, and 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:

Saint Gabriel Parish in Windsor and Saint Joseph Parish in Windsor (Poquonock) are to be merged, and from the merger form a new parish to be named “Saint Damien of Molokai”, with two church buildings: Saint Gabriel Church and Saint Joseph Church.

The merger is an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in the 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 Gabriel Parish and Saint Joseph 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 Damien of Molokai and, as such, are entrusted to the care of one pastor. The rich legacies and histories of Saint Gabriel Parish and Saint Joseph Parish will be promoted and honored at Saint Damien of Molokai Parish. Together, all of the parishioners are encouraged to unite with the newly merged parish through their 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 Saint Gabriel Parish and the extinct Saint Joseph Parish, 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 Damien of Molokai in accordance with the norm of law (c. 121). The Parish of Saint Damien of Molokai shall comprise all the territories of the former Parishes of Saint Gabriel and Saint Joseph, including the cemetery located at the extinct parish of Saint Joseph.

All the parish and sacramental records of the extinct Saint Gabriel Parish and the extinct Saint Joseph Parish are to be properly preserved and safeguarded at the premises of Saint Gabriel 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 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 2nd day of May in the Year of Our Lord 2017.

+ Leonard P. Blair

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford



Reverend Ryan M. Lerner
Chancellor