

COPY



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 Immaculate Conception Parish in New Hartford, Connecticut, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Harwinton, Connecticut, and the conferral of the title of "Our Lady of Hope" to the newly created parish in New Hartford, Connecticut. The principal motive is to provide more suitably for the good of souls (Christus Dominus no. 32).

WHEREAS, Immaculate Conception Parish was erected as a territorial parish in 1869 to serve the Irish and French-Canadian Catholic populations working in the busy local cotton mills after the Civil War, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, initially a mission Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Torrington, was later erected as a territorial parish in 1956 to serve the growing Catholic population of Harwinton;

WHEREAS, the Litchfield Deanery, wherein Immaculate Conception and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parishes are located, includes thirteen (13) small-to-medium-sized parishes including a cluster of four (4) parishes serving a similar demographic;

WHEREAS, on November 20, 2010, the parishes of Immaculate Conception and Immaculate Heart of Mary were linked and share a Pastor;

WHEREAS, the two parishes are located in adjacent municipalities, sharing the same socio-economic composition, and although the two parishes are eleven miles apart and distance has presented some challenges, over time many parishioners have grown accustomed to choosing the time for Mass that is most convenient with little regard for where that Mass is celebrated;

WHEREAS, although the two parishes have two religious education programs (child and adult) because of distance, they have shared events and programs, and many ministries 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 Waterbury Vicariate;

WHEREAS, in September 2015, to address the movement from “linked” to “merged,” forty parishioners from both parishes met four times with the Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Planning so that members of each parish could identify the challenges and opportunities posed by a merger, and parishioners, realizing that each parish had important things to offer the other, began to think of the linking and merging not in terms of “what is lost,” but in terms of “what is gained”;

WHEREAS, in February 2016, a group of fourteen parishioners, half from each parish, began work on a mission and vision statement and on strategic goals for what they anticipated to be the merged parish, and have since completed the mission and vision statements and continue to develop strategic goals, which will identify the parish’s priorities for the next 3-5 years and include developing parish ministries (current and new), faith formation, evangelization and stewardship;

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, 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 June 20, 2016, in accord with c. 515 §2,

THEREFORE, I hereby **DECREE** that:

The Parish of Immaculate Conception, and the Parish of Immaculate Heart of Mary, are to be merged, and from the merger form a new parish, to be called and named “Our Lady of Hope” in New Hartford, with two church buildings: Immaculate Conception Church in New Hartford and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Harwinton.

The merger is an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in the Litchfield 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. Immaculate Conception Parish and the Parish of Immaculate Heart of Mary, 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 Our Lady of Hope Parish and, as such, are entrusted to the care of one pastor. The rich legacies and histories of Immaculate Conception Parish and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish will be promoted and honored at Our Lady of Hope 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 Parish of Immaculate Conception and the extinct Parish of Immaculate Heart of Mary, 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 Our Lady of Hope in accordance with the norm of law (c. 121). The Parish of Our Lady of Hope shall comprise all the territories of the former Parishes of Immaculate Conception and Immaculate Heart of Mary, namely:

I. Immaculate Conception – New Hartford	II. Immaculate Heart of Mary – Harwinton
Northern Boundary: Mass. State Line	Northern Boundary: Northwest – Torrington
Western Boundary: Torrington	Northeast – New Hartford
Winsted	Western Boundary: Litchfield
Southern Boundary: Harwinton	Southern Boundary: Thomaston and Terryville
Eastern Boundary: Collinsville	Eastern Boundary: Collinsville (Burlington/
Granby	Canton)

and shall include the cemetery at Immaculate Conception Parish in New Hartford.

This parish is assigned to the Litchfield Deanery.

All the parish and sacramental records of the extinct Parish of Immaculate Conception and the extinct Parish of Immaculate Heart of Mary are to be properly preserved and safeguarded in Our Lady of Hope Parish in New Hartford, in accordance with the norm of law (cc. 535 §§1-5).

This decree becomes effective January 1, 2017, prior to which the substance of it is to be communicated to the parishioners by means of notice in the weekend bulletins of both parishes, as well as by publication in the Archdiocesan publication, *The Catholic Transcript*. Canonical recourse may be made within the peremptory time limit of ten (10) 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 29th day of September, 2016.

+ Leonard P. Blair
 Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
 Archbishop of Hartford

George S. Mukuka
 Reverend George S. Mukuka
 Chancellor