



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD  
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06105-3784

OFFICE OF  
THE ARCHBISHOP

May 12, 2017

Dear Parishioners,

I am writing about the results of the pastoral planning process that has been the focus of much attention in recent months. As with some of our other parishes, the decree concerning Saint Margaret of Scotland in Waterbury predates the decrees and general announcement made last week, and became effective on March 24, 2017. Saint Margaret's is part of a very exciting, although challenging merger of six parishes to form a new parish named All Saints. While you have already begun making this adjustment, I want to make a special request for your prayers for those who will be joining you at the Shrine of Saint Ann as members of this new parish.

Although change is usually difficult and often painful, the Church on earth, as the Second Vatican Council taught, is a "pilgrim people." Here we have no lasting home, but are on the way to a heavenly city. Along the way we constantly experience change as we die and rise with Jesus every day. There is no denying that there have been tremendous changes in our Catholic population over the last century. We have to ask whether what we have from the past is still the best way to address the need for worship, education and service by and for the Catholic people within the various localities of the Archdiocese. Thanks to criteria that have been thoughtfully developed, I believe we have a sound and principled plan for reinvigorating our collective mission, one that ensures greater stability for both parishes and pastors over the next several years.

The new canonical document regarding these changes has been posted for all to see, and is also accessible on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning website, [stewardsfortomorrow.org](http://stewardsfortomorrow.org). The Archdiocese will be providing personnel and guidance to make the merger successful.

Finally, and very importantly, effective June 29<sup>th</sup> I have appointed Father Diego Jimenez to be the Pastor of the newly created All Saints Parish. Much has been said about the shortage of priests. This is certainly a significant factor, but by no means the only one in pastoral planning. I earnestly encourage you to work and pray that more men whom God is calling to the priesthood will step forward and heed that call. Remember what Jesus said even during his earthly ministry: "The harvest is great, the laborers few. Pray the harvest master to send laborers into his harvest."

It seems to me that all these announcements are not so much an end, but only the first step in preparing ourselves to face the future with courage, faith and hope. It is urgently necessary that to these we now add love, without which, as Saint Paul says, we are nothing at all (cf. 1 Cor. 13). Whatever your parish, we are all members of one Catholic family of faith, and we need to reach out in welcome to those whose parishes are merging or closing. I am confident that those of you who are hearing this letter will go out of your way to be good neighbors and friends to your fellow Catholics at a time of change.

If we look closely at the long history of the Church, including the history of our own Archdiocese, we will find many outstanding individuals and communities who were unafraid to face the difficult challenges of their day. Please join me in praying that you and I will also be remembered as people of faith, courage and vision at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Lastly, I want to wish all a very Happy Mother's Day and promise you my prayers for all Mothers, those on earth and those in the kingdom of Heaven.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonard P. Blair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair  
Archbishop of Hartford