



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECREE

This decree concerns the merger of Saint Rita Parish in Hamden, Connecticut, with Saint Stephen, in Hamden, Connecticut, within the current Hamden-North Haven Deanery.

WHEREAS, Saint Rita Parish began as a mission of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and was established as a parish on February 3, 1932, and Saint Stephen started as a mission on June 18, 1915, to minister to the State Street section of Hamden, and was erected as parish in 1953;

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

WHEREAS, although from 2010 to 2015, there was an increase in households at Saint Rita Parish, from 2,097 to 2,481, there was sharp decline, from 650 to 471 households, at Saint Stephen Parish; nevertheless, the sacramental activities at the former parish decreased by 31% and only 30% for the latter;

WHEREAS, the schools from the two parishes have already merged, effective Fall, 2017.

WHEREAS, the possibility of merging the two Parishes has met a positive response, as the Parishes will now have one pastor, combined parish and school staff, unified religious education program, and office, as well as other resources; following discussions among the two parish communities, the pastors, and respective trustees, it was recommended that Saint Rita and Saint Stephen Parishes be merged to create a new parish;

WHEREAS, the intention or will of donors, any restrictions on assets, including land, as well as any acquired rights, have been examined and taken into consideration. The Presbyteral Council was consulted on May 1, 2017, in accordance with canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law in relation to the modification of parishes, and posed no objection;

Therefore, the following just causes suggest that Saint Rita Parish and Saint Stephen Parish merge:

1. the reasonable proximity of eleven (11) worship communities;
2. the desire to avoid duplication of services and increase in expenses associated with necessary repairs to and maintenance of aging structures;

3. the size and spiritual welfare of the parish communities;
4. the decline in parishioners and student enrollment at the schools of both parishes;
5. the spread of the Gospel, the promotion of unity among the People of God;
6. the enhancement of collaborative ministry, the better utilization of parish resources and available priest personnel, with an estimated parish operating revenue of \$1,044,357;
7. the good of souls will not thereby be impaired;

I HEREBY DECREE the “merger,” following from canons 121 & 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, of Saint Rita and Saint Stephen Parishes; the separate juridic (legal) personalities of Saint Rita and Saint Stephen Parishes will cease to exist, and they will no longer be subjects of obligations and rights under canon law; a new parish is now established, namely, Divine Mercy Parish, and both church buildings of the former Parishes will remain as sacred places for divine worship.

The assets and liabilities of the former Parishes will become the assets and liabilities of the new parish, Divine Mercy. The administration of the church buildings and premises will be based at the premises of Saint Rita Church, Hamden. The sacramental registers, along with any other parish records and historical documents, shall also be preserved at the aforementioned premises, according to the norm of canon 535. The territorial boundaries of the new parish will henceforth be the combined boundaries of the former Saint Rita and Saint Stephen Parishes.


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).

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