



MOST REVEREND LEONARD P. BLAIR
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD

DECREE

In Nomine Domini. Amen.

**EFFECTING THE MERGER OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL IN WATERBURY, AND
SAINT LEO THE GREAT IN WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT**

Whereas, Saints Peter and Paul Parish was established on April 15, 1920, to serve a burgeoning Catholic population in Waterbury's East end, and Saint Leo the Great was established in May 1974, as a territorial parish carved from the territory of Saints Peter and Paul in Waterbury's east end;

Whereas, the two parishes have seen a substantial decline in parishioners and those attending Masses and other liturgical serves during the last few decades because of changes in demographics, deaths, parishioners moving out or no longer practicing their faith and attending Mass. Because the low numbers of current active parishioners cannot adequately support the parish monetarily, the parishes are experiencing significant indebtedness, and the possibility of reversing this trend appears highly unlikely;

Whereas, the two parishes now share one pastor;

Whereas, after hearing the lay leadership, the clergy and the Pastoral Planning Committee, the Office of Pastoral Planning recommended that Saint Saints Peter and Paul Parish and Saint Leo the Great Parish be merged;

Whereas, all canonical requirements of canons 50, 51, 127, 166 and 515 have been fulfilled.

Therefore, after prayerful consideration of the present circumstances, and after hearing the parties mandated by law, most especially the Presbyteral Council, which met on May 1, 2017, in accordance with canon 515, §2 of the Code of Canon Law, I, the Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair, Archbishop of Hartford, holding before me my pastoral responsibilities to the this particular church, hereby declare and

DECREE

the following:

1. That the territorial parish of Saints Peter and Paul, Waterbury, Connecticut, be merged with the territorial parish of Saint Leo the Great, Waterbury, Connecticut, effective on June 29, 2017.
2. That the new parish formed will be a territorial parish, encompassing the territorial boundaries of the former parishes of Saints Peter and Paul and Saint Leo the Great. The consolidated and merged parish shall include the membership of the former parishes of Saints Peter and Paul and Saint Leo the Great.
3. That new parish will be named Mary, Mother of the Church Parish with two church buildings: Saints Peter and Paul Church and Saint Leo the Great Church.
4. That Saints Peter and Paul Church premises assume the administration of the merged parish and make suitable provision for the faithful of the merged parishes providing for their pastoral care and meeting their pastoral needs.

This decision is based upon a number of factors, among which are the decline in the Catholic worshipping community at both Parishes (4.1% at Saints Peter and Paul Parish and 36.3% at Saint Leo the Great Parish), the reasonable proximity of the worship communities and the respective church edifices (2.4 miles), the desire to avoid duplication of services and the increasing expenses associated with necessary repairs to and maintenance of aging structures, the spiritual welfare of the parish communities, the spread of the Gospel, the promotion of unity among the People of God, the enhancement of collaborative ministry and the better utilization of available resources and priest personnel.

The parish registers of the former Saint Leo the Great containing the records and registers of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage and deaths, along with parish records and historical documents, are to be forwarded to the premises of Saints Peter and Paul Church where they are to be faithfully preserved and maintained in accordance with canon 535, §§1-5. Any registers, records and historical documents not needed for continued administration of aforementioned parishes are to be forwarded to the Archdiocesan Archives. According to the norm of canon 121, all assets and liabilities, whether movable or immovable, of the former Parishes, will become the assets and liabilities of the juridic person of Mary, Mother of the Church Parish, Waterbury. In all financial matters involving wills, trusts and foundations to maintain the patrimony of both parishes, the intention of the founders and benefactors is to be respected. Any acquired rights are to be safeguarded.

The effect of the merger (*unio extinctiva*) of Saints Peter and Paul Parish and Saint Leo the Great Parish is the termination of the independent juridic personalities of Saints Peter and Paul Parish and Saint Leo the Great Parish. Thus, they will no longer be subjects of obligations and rights in canon law corresponding to their nature as juridic persons, nor will they be capable of acquiring, retaining, administering, or alienating temporal goods according to the norm of law.

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.



Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford



Reverend Ryan M. Lerner
Chancellor