

## DECREE

### **Merging Saint Peter Parish in Peterborough, New Hampshire, Saint Patrick Parish in Bennington, New Hampshire and Saint Denis Parish in Harrisville, New Hampshire To form one new canonical person**

Saint Peter Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Peterborough since 1874. Saint Patrick Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Bennington since 1936. Saint Denis Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Harrisville since 1902. During that time, many people have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and received the sacraments of the Church in these parishes. Now, in an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life, 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, it is necessary to make new provisions for the spiritual care of the parishioners of these parishes.

To that end, having asked parishioners to make known their needs and desires, having received the recommendations of Cluster Task Force # 12 with two lay liaisons and the pastor from each of the parishes, after consultation with the dean, the Long Range Planning Commission and the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Manchester and the Finance Council, and in accord with canons 121, 515 §2 §3 and 518 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Suppress and merge Saint Peter Parish in Peterborough, New Hampshire, Saint Patrick Parish in Bennington, New Hampshire and Saint Denis Parish in Harrisville, New Hampshire to form one territorial parish. The union shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, June 25, 2006. This merged parish shall include the membership of the former Saint Peter Parish, former Saint Patrick Parish and former Saint Denis Parish. The current Saint Peter Church edifice and the current St. Patrick Church edifice shall be the places of worship for the unified parish community until a new church edifice can be constructed. The St. Denis Church edifice will serve as a seasonal site for regional needs for as long as is pastorally necessary.
2. Establish that the name of the new territorial parish be from this moment known as **Divine Mercy Parish**. The names of the current Saint Peter Church edifice,

the St. Patrick Church edifice and St. Denis Church edifices shall remain unchanged.

3. The boundaries of the newly merged parish will encompass the towns of Bennington, Antrim, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Stoddard, Harrisville, Dublin and Peterborough.
4. If a new church edifice is constructed it may be dedicated under the name of the newly merged parish.

This decision is based upon a number of components, the fostering of unity, the enhancement of collaborative ministry, and the best use of available priest personnel.

All parish registers containing the records of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage, and deaths preserved at Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish shall be transferred to the new territorial parish office where they will be faithfully preserved in accord with canon 535, §§1-5; and according to the norm of canon 121, all assets, whether movable or immovable, and all liabilities of Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish upon this merger, will become the assets and liabilities of the new territorial parish. Furthermore, possession of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish shall be transferred to the new territorial parish and shall be administered in accordance with canons 1189 and 1292.

The merger of Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish will suppress and terminate the juridic personality of Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish which it now possesses by law. Therefore, Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish shall be no longer the subject in canon law of obligations and rights corresponding to its nature as a juridic person. In addition, said Saint Peter Parish, Saint Patrick Parish and Saint Denis Parish shall be capable no longer of acquiring, retaining, administering, and alienating temporal goods according to the norm of law.

I direct that this Decree be given to the pastor of the new territorial parish and that this information be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday June, 24, 2006 and Sunday, June 25, 2006.

Given at Manchester this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June 2006

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Bishop of Manchester

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Chancellor