

## **DECREE**

### **Merging Saint Agnes Parish in Ashland, New Hampshire, Saint Matthew Parish in Plymouth, New Hampshire and Saint Timothy Parish including Our Lady of Grace Chapel in Bristol, New Hampshire**

Saint Agnes Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Ashland since 1904. Saint Matthew Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Plymouth since 1916. Saint Timothy Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Bristol since 1953. 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 number nine, consisting of the pastor from each of the parishes and two lay liaisons from each of the parishes, after consultation with the Dean of the Lakes Region Deanery, the Long Range Planning Commission and the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Manchester and the Diocesan Finance Council, and in accord with canons 121, 515 and 518 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Merge Saint Agnes Parish in Ashland, New Hampshire, Saint Matthew Parish in Plymouth, New Hampshire and Saint Timothy Parish including Our Lady of Grace Chapel in Bristol, New Hampshire to form one territorial parish. The merger shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, July 2, 2006. This merged parish shall include the parish communities of the former Saint Agnes Parish, former Saint Matthew Parish, and former Saint Timothy Parish, and shall encompass the territory delineated by the former parishes of Saint Agnes, Saint Matthew, and Saint Timothy, which include the towns of Alexandria, Ashland, Bridgewater, Bristol, Campton, Ellsworth, Hebron, Hill, Holderness, New Hampton, Plymouth, Rumney, Waterville, and parts of Groton and Thornton. The St. Agnes Church edifice, the Saint Matthew Church edifice, and the St. Timothy Church edifice, including Our Lady of Grace Chapel edifice, shall be sites of worship for the merged parish community until such time as the pastor, with the advice of his parish council determines otherwise.

2. Establish that the name of the new parish be “Holy Trinity Parish.” The names of the current St. Agnes, Saint Matthew, and St. Timothy church edifices, including Our Lady of Grace chapel edifice shall remain unchanged.
3. Establish that in accord with canon 519 a pastor will be appointed by decree to foster the pastoral care of Holy Trinity Parish community.

This decision is based upon a number of components, among them, the spiritual welfare of the parish communities, the spread of the Gospel, the fostering of unity among the People of God in the Lakes Region Deanery, 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 Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish and Saint Timothy Parish shall be transferred to the Holy Trinity Parish office at the location of the former Saint Matthew parish office in Plymouth, New Hampshire, 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 Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish and Saint Timothy Parish upon this merger, will become the assets and liabilities of Holy Trinity Parish. Furthermore, ownership of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former Saint Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish and Saint Timothy Parish shall be transferred to Holy Trinity Parish and shall be administered in accordance with canons 1189 and 1292.

The merger of Saint Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish and Saint Timothy Parish will terminate their juridic personality, which they now possess by law. Therefore, Saint Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish and Saint Timothy Parish shall be no longer the subject in canon law of obligations and rights corresponding to their natures as juridic persons. In addition, said Saint Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish and Saint Timothy 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 pastors of Saint Agnes Parish, Saint Matthew Parish, and Saint Timothy and that this information be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, July 1 and Sunday, July 2, 2006.

Given at Manchester this twenty-second day of June, 2006.

Bishop of Manchester

Ecclesiastical Notary