

## DECREE

### **Merging Mary, Mother of the Church Parish in Newton, New Hampshire and Holy Angels Parish in Plaistow, New Hampshire**

Mary, Mother of the Church Parish has served the Catholic faithful in Newton since 1967. Holy Angels Parish has served the Catholic faithful in Plaistow since 1892. During that time, many people have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and have 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 Eighteen, consisting of the pastors from the parishes and two liaisons from each of the parishes, after consultation with the Dean of the Rockingham Deanery, the Long Range Planning Commission, the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Manchester, and the Diocesan Finance Council, and in accord with canons 121, 515 §2 and 518 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Merge Mary, Mother of the Church Parish, Newton, New Hampshire, and Holy Angels Parish, Plaistow, New Hampshire, to form one territorial parish. The merger shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, June 10, 2007. This merged parish shall include the parish communities of the former Mary, Mother of the Church Parish and the former Holy Angels Parish, and shall encompass the territory delineated by the two former parishes, including the entire towns of Atkinson, East Kingston, Kingston, Newton, Plaistow, and South Hampton, with the southern boundary being the state line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts bordering on Amesbury, Haverhill, and Merrimac. The existing church edifice of each of the former parishes will remain the sites of worship for the merged parish community, until such time that the pastor, with the advice of his pastoral council and with my consent, determines otherwise.
2. Establish that the name of the new parish be Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, but that the names of the current Mary, Mother of the Church edifice and Holy Angels Church 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 the Saint Luke the Evangelist 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 of the People of God in the Rockingham 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 Mary, Mother of the Church Parish and Holy Angels Parish will be transferred to Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish office at the location of the former Holy Angels Parish office, where they will be faithfully preserved in accord with canon 535, §§1-5. According to the norm of canon 121, all assets, whether movable or immovable, including Holy Angels Pre-school, Holy Angels Cemetery, and Saint Frederick Parish Family Center, and all liabilities of the two former parishes will become the assets and liabilities of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish. Furthermore, ownership of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former two parishes will be transferred to Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish and will be administered in accordance with the prescriptions of Church law.

The merger of Mary, Mother of the Church Parish and Holy Angels Parish will terminate the juridic personality of each of the former parishes, which they now possess by law, and no longer will they be the subjects in canon law of obligations and rights 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.

I direct that this Decree be given to the pastor of Mary, Mother of the Church Parish and Holy Angels Parish, and that this information, as well as the attached "Manner of Lodging Hierarchical Recourse" against this Decree, be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, June 9, 2007 and Sunday, June 10, 2007.

Given at Manchester this fourth day of June, 2007.

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Bishop of Manchester

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Ecclesiastical Notary