

DECREE

Merging Immaculate Conception Parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Saint James Parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Immaculate Conception Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Portsmouth since 1851. Saint Catherine of Siena Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Portsmouth since 1951. Saint James Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Portsmouth since 1958. 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 Twenty, consisting of the pastor from each of the parishes and two liaisons from each of the parishes, after consultation with the Dean of the Seacoast 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 §2 §3 and 518 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Merge Immaculate Conception Parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Saint James Parish in Portsmouth, New Hampshire to form one territorial parish. The merger shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, June 25, 2006. This merged parish shall include the parish communities of the former Immaculate Conception Parish, the former Saint Catherine of Siena Parish and the former Saint James Parish, and shall encompass the territory delineated by the three former parishes, including the entire City of Portsmouth, and the Townships of Newington, Greenland, and New Castle. 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 Corpus Christi Parish, but that the names of the current Immaculate Conception Church edifice, St. Catherine of Siena Church edifice and St. James 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 Corpus Christi 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, and the fostering of unity of the People of God in the Seacoast 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 Immaculate Conception Parish, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish and Saint James Parish will be transferred to Corpus Christi Parish office at the location of the former Saint Catherine of Siena 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 Saint Patrick School, and Calvary Cemetery and Saint Mary Cemetery, and all liabilities of the three former parishes will become the assets and liabilities of Corpus Christi Parish. Furthermore, ownership of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former three parishes will be transferred to Corpus Christi Parish and will be administered in accordance with canons 1189 and 1292.

The merger of Immaculate Conception Parish, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish and Saint James 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 pastors of Immaculate Conception Parish, Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, and Saint James 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 twenty-second day of June 2006.

Bishop of Manchester

Ecclesiastical Notary