

## DECREE

### **Merging Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish, Keene, New Hampshire, to form one new juridic person**

Saint Bernard Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Keene since 1862. Saint Margaret Mary Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Keene since 1955. 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 in the Monadnock region of the State of New Hampshire, 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, the sacraments and the continuation of ministries, 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 the Cluster Task Force 15, consisting of two liaisons and the pastor from each of the parishes, after consultation with the dean of the Monadnock 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 §2 §3 and 518 of the *1983 Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Merge Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish to form one territorial parish. The union shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, September 26, 2010. The new parish shall include the membership of the former Saint Bernard Parish and the former Saint Margaret Mary Parish. The existing church edifice of each of the former parishes will remain the sites of worship for the new parish community, until such time that the pastor, with the advice of his parish pastoral and finance councils, and with my consent, determines otherwise.
2. The boundaries of the new parish will encompass the entire territory of the former Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish, including the city of Keene and the towns of Marlborough and Troy and the entire township of Swanzey.
3. Establish that the name of the new territorial parish be known from midnight at the end of Sunday, September 26, 2010 as Parish of the Holy Spirit. The name of the current Saint Bernard Church, Saint Margaret Mary Church and Immaculate Church edifices shall remain unchanged.
4. Establish that, in accord with canon 519, a pastor will be appointed to foster the pastoral care of Parish of the Holy Spirit.

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 Monadnock 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 Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish shall be transferred to Parish of the Holy Spirit 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 Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish upon this merger, will become the assets and liabilities of Parish of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, possession of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish shall be transferred to Parish of the Holy Spirit and shall be administered in accordance with canons 1189 and 1292.

The merger of Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish will suppress and terminate the juridic personality of Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish, which they now possess by law. Therefore, Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish shall be no longer subject in canon law of obligations and rights corresponding to their nature as juridic persons. In addition, said Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary 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 Saint Bernard Parish and Saint Margaret Mary Parish, and that this information, as well as the “Manner of Initiating Recourse Against an Administrative Decree”, be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, September 25, 2010 and Sunday, September 26, 2010.

Given at Manchester this fifteenth day of September, 2010

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Bishop of Manchester

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Chancellor