

DECREE

Merging Saint Francis Xavier Parish in Groveton, New Hampshire, and Sacred Heart Parish, in North Stratford, New Hampshire

Saint Francis Xavier Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Groveton, Northumberland and Stratford since 1899. Sacred Heart Parish has served the Catholic faithful of North Stratford since 1888. 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 Thirty, consisting of the pastors from the parishes and two liaisons from each of the parishes, after consultation with the Dean of the White Mountain 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 Saint Francis Xavier Parish in Groveton, New Hampshire, and Sacred Heart Parish in North Stratford, New Hampshire to form one territorial parish. The merger shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, October 7, 2007. This merged parish shall include the parish communities of the former Saint Francis Xavier Parish and the former Sacred Heart Parish, and shall encompass the territory delineated by the two former parishes. 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 parish pastoral and finance council and with my consent, determines otherwise.
2. Establish that the name of the new parish be **Saint Marguerite d'Youville Parish**, but that the names of the current Saint Francis Xavier Church edifice and Sacred Heart 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 **Saint Marguerite d'Youville 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 White Mountain 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 Francis Xavier Parish and Sacred Heart Parish will be transferred to **Saint Marguerite d'Youville Parish** office at 11 State Street in Groveton, the location of the former Saint Francis Xavier 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 Francis Xavier Cemetery and Sacred Heart Cemetery, and all liabilities of the two former parishes will become the assets and liabilities of **Saint Marguerite d'Youville 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 Marguerite d'Youville Parish** and will be administered in accordance with the prescriptions of Church law.

The merger of Saint Francis Xavier Parish and Sacred Heart 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 Saint Francis Xavier Parish and Sacred Heart Parish, and that this information, as well as the "Manner of Initiating Hierarchical Recourse" against this Decree, be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, October 6, 2007 and Sunday, October 7, 2007.

Given at Manchester this 26th day of September, 2007.

/s/ + John B. McCormack
Bishop of Manchester

/s/ Edward J. Arsenault
Moderator of the Curia