

Dionysius



Josephus

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATA  
EPISCOPUS CAMDENSIS

## DECREE

OF THE MERGER OF

SAINT JOSEPH PARISH, SOUTH CAMDEN

INTO

THE PARISH OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION,  
CAMDEN

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that a parish is "the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love..." (CCC, 2179)

Mindful of these critical roles of a parish in the life of Catholics; and also that a parish is tremendously meaningful and involved with the "certain community of the Christian faithful" for which it is constituted within the diocese; (cf. Can. 515, §1) it is only with careful study, sincere consideration, and prayer before the Eyes of God that a diocesan bishop makes a decision to alter parishes within the local church of the Diocese which has been entrusted to his care to shepherd along with the cooperation of diocesan presbyterate. (cf. Can. 369)

Furthermore, when an alteration of parishes is deemed necessary in the see city of the Diocese itself, there is then a heightened sense of the importance of what must be accomplished; and from that a just augmentation of the study, consideration, and consultation before a final decision is made and promulgated.

The conditions in the City of Camden have changed significantly throughout the years since the establishment of its various parishes; and at times, for just causes since the founding of the Diocese of Camden, my predecessors deemed it necessary to suppress or merge certain parishes within the City of Camden in the years 1973, 1989, and 2010.

Still, in recent years it has continued to become evident that certain parishes struggle in carrying out the work for which they had been established. Each of the individual parishes is unique and has adapted, insofar as possible, to conditions which challenge the work of the Church in the City of Camden such as significant demographic and population shifts, a reduction in the number of resident and practicing Catholics within Camden, a corresponding decrease in revenue to support the work of the parishes in Camden, a reduction in the availability of clergy, and other conditions and trends which are either applicable to all of Camden; or to the particular circumstances of the individual parishes within Camden.

The following just causes therefore, support the merger of Saint Joseph Parish into the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception:

- 1) to provide more effectively for the pastoral needs of the people in the given area of the City of Camden;
- 2) to assure the vitality of parish life in this area;
- 3) to provide for a better stewardship of resources; and,
- 4) to provide for the optimum use of clergy and lay personnel.

Accordingly, having judged that sufficient just causes are present and that the good of souls will not be thereby impaired; and having consulted and heard the opinion of the Presbyteral Council in accord with canon 515, §2 at a meeting held on June 22, 2017 in which the members deliberated, thoroughly and in depth and then voted unanimously to recommend to me that I decree this merger;

And furthermore, having heard the opinions of a special *ad hoc* committee made up of both clergy and lay representation of the parishes of the City of Camden; which, along with diocesan officials and the local vicar forane, met for a period of over a year, from November of 2015 to March of 2017;

In virtue of the prescripts of canons 121 and 515, §2 of the Code of Canon Law, in order to provide more effectively for the spiritual welfare and the salvation of souls,

### **I HEREBY DECREE**

The merger of Saint Joseph Parish (civilly incorporated as St. Joseph's Catholic Church), South Camden into the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (civilly incorporated as The Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception), Camden.

The boundaries of the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception are hereby altered to the following:

Start at the point the Cooper River flows into the Delaware River.

1. Southeast along the Cooper River to its point of intersection with Kaighns Avenue

2. West on Kaighns Avenue to Haddon Avenue
3. Southeast on Haddon Avenue to Atlantic Street
4. West on Atlantic Street to 9th Street
5. North on 9th Street to Mt. Vernon Street
6. West on Mt. Vernon Street and its imaginary extension to the Delaware River
7. North along the bank of the Delaware River, rounding Cooper Point, to the point the Cooper River flows into the Delaware River (point of origin)

The Parkside neighborhood of Camden, formally assigned to Sacred Heart Parish, will now be assigned to the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, in whose boundaries Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, which is situated in the Parkside neighborhood, will be located.

Saint Joseph Parish, as it was established as the personal parish for the Polish Catholic Community in the City of Camden is hereby suppressed. Nevertheless, I instruct that an apostolate for the Polish Catholic Community, as the successor of the ministry done at Saint Joseph Parish be transferred, situated, and coordinated from the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Reverend John J. Fisher, OSFS will continue to serve as the rector of the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The parochial church of the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception is located at 642 Market Street, Camden. The other churches of the parish, which retain their proper titles, are Saint Joseph church, located at 1010 Liberty Street, Camden; Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Fatima church located at 832 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Camden; and Holy Name church located at 522 State Street, Camden.

The goods and property of Saint Joseph Parish, including its real estate and buildings, as well as its debts and obligations, shall be assigned to the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception according to the prescripts of canons 121 and 123; always having observed before else the intention of the founders and donors according to the norms of the same canons.

As of the effective date of this DECREE, the sacramental registers of Saint Joseph Parish shall be closed and transferred to the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. All sacraments administered from that date forward will be recorded in the sacramental registers of the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

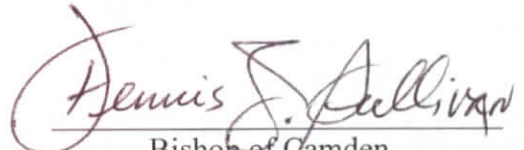
This DECREE becomes effective on July 31, 2017.

If a person considers himself or herself aggrieved by this administrative DECREE, that person is within his or her canonical rights to seek revocation or emendation according to the norm of canon 1734 and to make hierarchical recourse according to the norm of canon 1737.

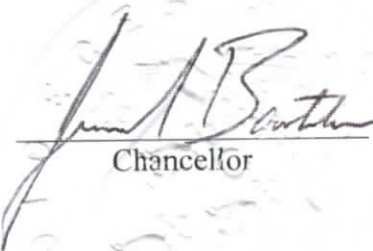
I instruct that this DECREE be communicated immediately to the parishioners of Saint Joseph Parish and the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception by their respective

administrators. This DECREE is likewise to be published immediately on the diocesan website and in the next printing of the Catholic Star Herald. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Camden, on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June, in the Year of Our Lord, 2017.

  
Bishop of Camden

*in cuius fide...*

  
Chancellor