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TIMOTHY MICHAEL DOLAN

Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church

of the Title of Nostra Signora di Guadalupe a Monte Mario

By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

DECREE
OF SUPPRESSION OF SAINT BENEDICT THE MOOR PARISH,
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Whereas bishops “feed their sheep in the name of the Lord by fulfilling their office of teaching, sanctifying and governing them” and “pursue their apostolic work as witnesses of Christ to all people” (cf. Vatican II, Decree on the pastoral office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, October 28, 1965, n. 11);

Whereas the parish is “pre-eminent among all the other communities present in his Diocese, for which the Bishop has primary responsibility: it is with the parishes above all that he must be concerned” (Pope Saint John Paul II, post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Pastores gregis*, October 16, 2003, n. 45) and whereas the parish “remains the fundamental unit in the daily life of the Diocese” (ibid.);

Whereas “the parish is not an outdated institution” and “continues to be the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”, provided it “does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few”, but on the contrary is “a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach” (cf. Pope Francis, apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, November 24, 2013, n. 28);

Whereas the Bishop should proceed, after consulting the diocesan presbyteral council, to alter territorial boundaries, to divide parishes that are too large, to merge small parishes, to establish new parishes or non-territorial centers for pastoral service in the

community, or even to reorganize completely the arrangement of parishes within a particular city if the good of the faithful so requires, and whereas the Bishop may wish to set up a diocesan office or commission that can operate in collaboration with other relevant diocesan commissions in order to study all the issues pertaining to the establishment of parishes and the construction of churches (cf. Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores*, February 22, 2004, n. 214);

Whereas from 2004 through 2009, our beloved predecessor, His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan, initiated a study about the future of the parishes in the Archdiocese of New York and made several decisions as a result thereof;

Whereas, after my appointment as Archbishop in 2009, a multi-year pastoral planning process, *Making All Things New*, was undertaken to continue strengthening and enhancing parish life in the Archdiocese of New York and to assist the archdiocese in serving its Catholic faithful most effectively, and whereas this pastoral planning process, which had its beginnings in 2010, sought the input and suggestions of parishioners, the leadership of religious orders of women and men, and the clergy;

Whereas radical changes and shifts in demographics have occurred over the past decades, including a move away from the urban center into the suburbs, together with a substantial immigration of Hispanics;

Whereas the personal parish of Saint Benedict the Moor was originally established in 1883 as the first African American personal parish in New York City, and whereas by the 1920's, the membership of the parish started to decline, and whereas this personal parish has become extinguished since no Catholic community belonging to that parish exists;

Whereas the extinction of the community is further illustrated by the fact that the last Mass in the church was celebrated for a community of religious in May 2014, the church was relegated to profane but not sordid use on June 30, 2017, and permission was obtained from the Dicastery for the Clergy on February 6, 2023 to sell the now relegated church;

Whereas the good of souls will suffer no detriment;

Whereas on February 23, 2023, I consulted the presbyteral council about the recommendation to suppress the personal parish of Saint Benedict the Moor, New York, and whereas the presbyteral council gave a positive recommendation;

Therefore, I, the undersigned Archbishop of New York, have decided as follows:

DECREE

1. The personal parish of Saint Benedict the Moor, New York, is suppressed.
2. In accordance with canon 123 of the Code of Canon Law, the ecclesiastical goods, patrimonial rights, and obligations go to the juridic person immediately superior, that is the Archdiocese of New York, without prejudice to the intention of the founders and donors and acquired rights.
3. All registers containing records of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials hitherto preserved by the parish of Saint Benedict the Moor are to be conveyed to the archives of the Archdiocese of New York, where they shall be faithfully preserved according to canon 535, 1°-5° of the Code of Canon Law.


This decree is effective immediately. At the same time, I order this decree to be made public to all the faithful through its publication on this day on the website of the archdiocese. This publication on the website will be the legitimate notification. An announcement will be made in the archdiocesan digital newsroom.

All those who claim to have been aggrieved by this decree are herewith notified that, if they desire to file recourse against this decree, they are required, *ad validitatem*, to submit a petition in the sense of canon 1734 §1 to us within ten useful days from the legitimate notification of this decree.

Given at the Chancery, New York, NY, this 21st day of March 2023.



Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York



John P. Cahill
Chancellor