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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 MERGER OF THE PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, CORNWALL-ON-HUDSON, NY, AND THE PARISH OF SAINT JOSEPH, NEW WINDSOR, NY

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" (St 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 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 centres 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 our 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 the initial work consisted in surveying the parishioners of every parish of the archdiocese; meeting with priests, deacons, and religious throughout the archdiocese; consulting with the archdiocesan pastoral council; and reviewing my own observations from my own extensive parish visits since my 2009 appointment as archbishop;

Whereas, albeit not mandatory in this matter, I also consulted with the Archdiocesan Finance Council;

Whereas the existing parish structure of the archdiocese was largely established between the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries;

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 Archdiocese faces a decline in the number of available priests;

Whereas parishes are confronted with a declining number of faithful attending on a regular basis Sunday Mass;

Whereas the changing situation puts a huge financial burden on the smaller parishes, and whereas deficits are covered increasingly by archdiocesan loans;

Whereas the 368 parishes grouped in 75 parish clusters provided their own input about the future of the parishes in the Archdiocese, in particular about collaboration of their own parish with one or more neighboring parishes;

Whereas an archdiocesan advisory council was established, comprised of 40 clergy, religious men and women, and the faithful from across the archdiocese to coordinate, receive, review and recommend any proposed changes to the parish structure;

Whereas a recommendation was given to merge the parish of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, 10 Second Street, Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York, with the parish of Saint Joseph, 4 St. Joseph Place, New Windsor, New York, based upon the complementary of the two parishes, their proximity, and the pastoral need for intensive collaboration and the need for the care of the souls;

After having heard the presbyteral council on June 30 and July 1, 2014, and again on October 28, 2014;

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

DECREE

1. The parishes of Saint Thomas of Canterbury in Cornwall-on-Hudson, and of Saint Joseph in New Windsor, New York, are merged. The name of the newly merged parish will be the parish of Saint Thomas of Canterbury and of Saint Joseph, until such time when the parish community through the pastor proposes a new name. The boundaries of the newly merged parish will be same as the boundaries of the former parishes. The parish will have two churches.

2. The church of Saint Thomas of Canterbury is herewith designated as the parish church.

3. The church of Saint Joseph will maintain a regular schedule of Masses and the celebration of other sacraments.

4. All members of the originating parishes shall now become members of the new parish, provided they have domicile or quasi-domicile in the newly merged parish.

5. All registers containing records of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials hitherto preserved by the parish of Saint Thomas of Canterbury in Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York and the parish of Saint Joseph in New Windsor, New York are to be conveyed to the offices of the newly merged parish at the premises of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, where they shall be faithfully preserved according to canon 535, 1°-5° of the Code of Canon Law.

6. All ecclesiastical goods of the originating parishes are now to belong to the newly merged parish. Likewise, all liabilities of the originating parishes are now transferred to the newly merged parish.

This decree will be implemented by August 1, 2015.

All those who claim to have been aggrieved by this decree are herewith notified that, if they desire to file recourse against our 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 2nd day of November, 2014.

+ Tim. Card. Dolan

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York

Gregory Mustaciuolo

Rev. Msgr. Greg Mustaciuolo
Chancellor