



Prot. No. 19-007

**Decree of Extinctive Union of
the Parishes of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony,
St. Anthony of Saxony, St. Paul, St. Peter**

Decree of Establishment of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish

Preamble

St. Peter Parish was erected in 1832, with its first church built in 1832 on the corner of Edward and Ochterloney Streets. The present church was blessed in 1969. As the parish community and Mass attendance grew, several missions and parishes were established to better serve the spiritual needs of the community.

Immaculate Conception Parish was established in 1921, at the request of local Catholics due to the rapidly expanding population of Woodside and Imperoyal. The church was officially opened and blessed in 1922.

St. Paul began in 1931 as a mission of St. Peter's, holding Masses in St. Paul School on Jamieson Street. It was erected as a parish in 1941, continuing to meet in St. Paul's school, and the present church was blessed and opened in 1949.

St. Anthony began as a mission of St. Paul in 1947, and was erected as a parish in 1948. The present church was completed 1973.

In 1984, Archbishop Hayes established a Polish Apostolate to minister to the Polish community in Halifax and Dartmouth. The first Mass was celebrated at St. John the Baptist Church in Halifax, and for many years the community worshipped at St. Joseph Church in Halifax. In 1993 the community moved to St. Anthony Parish in Dartmouth as a way of supporting the struggling parish. In 1997, Archbishop Burke established a non-territorial parish for all faithful of Polish descent or language, based out of St. Anthony Church. The parish was erected as St. Anthony of Saxony, but became known as St. Faustina Kowalska Mission around the time of St. Faustina Kowalska's canonization in 2000. The community continues to worship at St. Anthony Church.

Recently, with the steady decrease in Mass attendance across the province of Nova Scotia and accompanying financial restraints, the decline in the number of priests available to serve the parishes, the continued secularization of the culture, and a desire to consolidate parish ministries and services, decisions regarding the configuration of parishes in the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth were required.

Consultation & Decision

In 2017 I released a diocesan pastoral plan, *Equip the Saints*, to begin to address these challenges to our local Church. Among other initiatives, the plan proposed a reconfiguration of our parishes to help us more fully orient our temporal goods and pastoral activity towards fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ. All clergy and parishioners were encouraged to read, discuss, and reflect on this plan, and invited to submit any questions they had. I, along with members of my diocesan staff, personally responded to this feedback at the 2017 Assembly of the People of God, our annual diocesan adult conference, in October 2017. In February 2018, members of the parishes were invited to participate in a diocesan-wide Lenten Video Series, which outlined the vision and general timeline for restructuring. At that time parishioners were asked to send in questions, concerns, and comments about this vision by the Feast of Pentecost (May 2018).

Additionally, clergy from each region of the diocese were specifically consulted and asked to submit proposals, developed in consultation with their lay leaders, for new parish configurations by June 30, 2018. The Dartmouth/Eastern Shore region clergy met with me on November 14 and December 14, 2017. A broader consultation meeting for clergy and transition team members was held on April 28, 2018, which offered all attendees an opportunity to submit parish proposals and other feedback. Clergy met again with members of my staff on June 6, 2018 to review the feedback from that meeting.

Using the proposals and feedback from clergy and laity, my staff and I developed an action plan titled *New Parishes: Stronger Together*. This first draft was shared with the clergy of the entire diocese during two days of consultations in October 2018. Following these meetings, a revised draft of the plan was presented to all the faithful at the October 2018 Assembly of the People of God, with further input from the faithful sought until mid-November 2018.

On December 6, 2018 a final draft of the plan – which included the establishment of a new parish comprising Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Faustina Kowalska Mission – was presented to all the clergy for final discussion. Having heard the clergy, the Presbyteral Council was consulted, and accepted the proposed parish configurations on December 6, 2018. The action plan was launched January 1, 2019.

A transition team was established in February 2019, comprising parishioners, staff, and the pastor of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Faustina

Kowalska Mission. This team informed and involved parishioners of all five communities in determining the necessary facilities, human resources, and administrative structures of a new parish, as well as determining a name deemed appropriate to the community's charisms and devotions.

The transition team met a total of twelve times between February and September 2019. They created and distributed six different newsletters to keep all parishioners informed, and maintained "Question and Answer Boxes" in each church to solicit feedback from parishioners. As well, a parish town hall meeting was hosted on May 28, 2019 for members of all the communities. In September 30, the pastor and transition team recommended that Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish be established, comprising the former parishes of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, and St. Peter, and with a particular ministry to the Polish population of the parish and surrounding regions. The recommendation included the retention of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, and St. Peter as worship spaces.

Whereas the parishioners of these five communities were all invited to provide recommendations about the diocesan reconfiguration generally and their own parish merger specifically;

Whereas Rev. James Richards, pastor of these communities, submitted a letter to me dated September 30, 2019 requesting the merger of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, and St. Peter.;

Whereas the Council of Priests was apprised of the situation of these communities on December 6, 2018 and the Council agreed with the proposal for these communities, effective January 1, 2020. Additionally, on October 31, 2019 the Council voted unanimously on a specific motion to create the new parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe;

Whereas the spiritual needs of the parishioners of these communities have been closely considered and are able to be met through the creation of this new parish;

Whereas Canon 515 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law* gives the diocesan bishop the authority to erect, suppress or alter parishes, after he has consulted the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese;

Whereas the Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, *Apostolorum Successores*, of February 22, 2004 reminds the bishop that he has the responsibility of proceeding, after consulting the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese, to alter territorial boundaries, to merge smaller parishes, to establish new parishes for the pastoral service in the community, or even to reorganize completely the arrangement of parishes within a particular city;

Whereas the Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops reminds the bishop that he has the responsibility to organize the arrangement of parishes in ways adapted to the care of souls, according to a vision of the appropriate use of resources in the diocese (nn. 214-251).

Therefore, invoking the authority given to me as the Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth, and from canon 515 §2, and judging that all the conditions have been met, I hereby decree that, effective January 1, 2020, the parishes of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Anthony of Saxony, St. Paul, and St. Peter will be merged to create one parish, called Our Lady of Guadalupe.

I furthermore decree as follows:

- The territory that composed the former Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, and St. Peter will henceforth compose the territory of the new parish;
- Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Paul, and St. Peter will be places of worship for the new parish;
- The parish records and sacramental registers of the former parishes shall become the responsibility of the new parish;
- The real property – lands and buildings – of the former parishes shall, upon their merger into the new parish, become the property of the new parish, to be maintained, administered, alienated, or otherwise disposed of in accordance with civil and canon law;
- Any monetary funds of the former parishes that were previously designated as "restricted," shall continue to be maintained separately as part of the patrimony of the new parish, and used solely for those purposes for which they were restricted;
- After payment of any outstanding debts, any remaining monetary funds of the former parishes shall automatically become the patrimony of the new parish; likewise, any outstanding liabilities of the former parishes shall automatically become the responsibility of the new parish (see Canon 121).


Anyone who feels aggrieved by these decrees may have recourse following the appropriate procedures outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* (Canon 1734).

It is my hope and prayer that the parishioners of Immaculate Conception, St. Anthony, St. Faustina Kowalska (St. Anthony of Saxony), St. Paul, and St. Peter will accept this decision in a spirit of faith. May this new parish and its outreach to the local Polish community be a sign of the commitment and vitality of the parishioners as they continue to grow and serve as a vibrant Christian community in the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth.

Given at Halifax, NS under our signature, the seal of the diocese, and the signature of the chancellor this 3rd day of December in the year of our Lord, two thousand and nineteen.



† Anthony Mancini
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth



Rev. Mr. Robert Doyle
Chancellor