



*Prot. No. 19-008*

**Decree of Extinctive Union of  
St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, St. John XXIII Parish**

**Decree of Establishment of Divine Mercy Parish**

**Preamble**

According to tradition, a Catholic church was built in Eastern Passage between 1841 and 1846, as a mission of St. Peter Parish, Dartmouth. The cemetery was blessed in 1849 by Archbishop Walsh. In 1921 St. Andrew's became a mission of the newly created parish of Immaculate Conception. The current church was blessed and officially opened December 9, 1926, with a major interior renovation in 1970 to provide more seating. The community ran St. Andrew's School, staffed by Sisters of Charity, from 1931 to 1969. St. Andrew's was erected as a parish on August 4, 1946.

St. Clement Parish was established in 1955 to serve the ever-growing Catholic population of St. Peter Parish. Its first Mass was November 20, 1955, in Southdale School, Dartmouth. Construction of the church began June 1956, and it was blessed on November 24, 1957.

In 1973, Archbishop James Hayes approached Fr. Joe Pottie about opening a new parish in the rapidly growing Cole Harbour area. Fr. Pottie moved into St. Clement's rectory, and spent time in 1974 meeting with local Catholics and celebrating Mass in their homes. In April 1974 the parish community began, celebrating four Masses every weekend at Colonel John Stuart School. Less than month later a fifth Mass was added, and shortly thereafter the community outgrew the location and moved to Colby Village School. The present church was built in 1976, with major renovations/additions in 1982, 1983, and 1986. In the fall of 1983, the parish community was split with the formation of St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

Although Pope John XXIII functioned as a parish from its inception, the preparation of the original decree was delayed and forgotten. As of April 27, 2014, the community is now St. John XXIII Parish.

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 the parishes of St. Andrew, St. Clement, and St. John XXIII– 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 pastors of St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish. This team informed and involved parishioners of all three 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 eight times between February and September 2019, which included meetings with and presentations from various committees from the parishes. In a letter dated September 30, 2019, the pastor and transition team recommended that Divine Mercy Parish be established, comprising the former parishes of St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish. The recommendation included the retention of St. Andrew, St. Clement, and St. John XXIII churches as worship spaces.

Whereas the parishioners of St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish were all invited to provide recommendations about the diocesan reconfiguration generally and their own parish merger specifically;

Whereas Fr. Gerald David, pastor of St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish submitted a letter to me dated September 30, 2019 requesting the merger of the three parishes;

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 Divine Mercy Parish;

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 St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish will be merged to create one parish, called Divine Mercy Parish.

I furthermore decree as follows:

- The territory that composed the former St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish will henceforth compose the territory of the new parish;
- St. Andrew Church, St. Clement Church, and St. John XXIII Church 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 St. Andrew Parish, St. Clement Parish, and St. John XXIII Parish will accept this decision in a spirit of faith. May this new parish 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 3<sup>rd</sup> day of December in the year of our Lord, two thousand and nineteen.



†Anthony Mancini  
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth



Rev. Mr. Robert Doyle  
Chancellor

