



*Prot. No. 19-016*

**Decree of Extinctive Union of  
St. Augustine Parish, its missions of St. Anthony and St. Patrick,  
St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish**

**Decree of Establishment of Holy Apostles**

**Preamble**

The first church on the western shore of Nova Scotia was built in Prospect in 1794. The priest in Prospect travelled extensively through Nova Scotia – his territory would have covered the western shore from Shelburne to Prospect, across to Windsor and what is now called New Ross. Over the years, numerous smaller missions were established, all served from Prospect. From 1825 onwards, other parishes were established, slowly reducing the size of the Prospect parish and allowing for better care for the ever-growing Catholic communities in the region. In 1963, with transportation by boat no longer the norm, the parish centre and priest's residence shifted from Prospect further inland to Shad Bay. In 2010, due to declining resources in the parishes and fewer priests, the new parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish was established by bringing together Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish in Terence Bay and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Prospect, along with their missions of St. Joseph (Shad Bay), St. Thomas (East Dover), and St. Christopher (Hatchet Lake).

From at least the 1850s, a priest resided in Chester and was responsible for most of Lunenburg County, including Chester, Bridgewater, Lunenburg, and New Ross. In 1885 the bishop authorized the priest to reside in Bridgewater instead of Chester to serve the area. In 1946 Lunenburg County was split, and the parish of St. Augustine in Chester was formally established. The parish included the missions of St. Patrick in New Ross and St. Anthony in Hubbards.

The first church in New Ross was built in 1827, at which time the community was called Sherbrooke. St. Patrick may have had their own resident priest when first established, but by 1851 they were served from Chester, like many of their neighbouring communities. The current church was built in 1877 on the same site.

St. Anthony in Hubbards was built in 1937, but the community had outgrown this church by the 1970s and a new one was built in 1977. St. Anthony serves the communities of Allen Heights to East River inclusive, the communities of the Blandford peninsula, and also the many summer vacationers.

One of the parishes that split off from the Prospect parish was Beechville/Lakeside, in 1938. The parish priest from Prospect was concerned that many Catholics in the area were unable to travel to an existing church and were therefore not attending Mass. The new church in Beechville was blessed in 1938 and was assigned its first resident priest in 1945. In 2007, Sacred Heart Parish in Lakeside and St. James Mission (mission of St. Ignatius Parish in Bedford) amalgamated to form St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish. Their current church, in Upper Tantallon, opened June 1, 2016.

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. I met with clergy from the area on January 25, 2019.

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 St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel – 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 St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. 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 eight times between February and October 2019, and held three town hall meetings for the broader parish community – one in each of the three existing parishes – in August and September 2019. In October 2019, the pastor and transition team recommended that Holy Apostles Parish be established, comprising the former parishes of St. Augustine, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The recommendation included the retention of St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel (St. Joseph's Church) as worship spaces.

Whereas the parishioners of St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel were all invited to provide recommendations about the diocesan reconfiguration generally and their own parish merger specifically;

Whereas Rev. Roberto Donato, pastor of St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, submitted a letter to me dated October 17, 2019 requesting the merger of St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel;

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

Whereas the spiritual needs of the parishioners of the five 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, St. Augustine Parish, its missions of St. Anthony and St. Patrick, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish will be merged to create one parish, called Holy Apostles Parish.

I furthermore decree as follows:

- The territory that composed the former St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel will henceforth compose the territory of the new parish;
- St. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel (St. Joseph's 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;




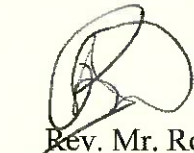
- Any monetary funds of the former parishes that were previously designated as "restricted," shall continue to be maintained separately as part of the patrimony of the new parish, and used solely for those purposes for which they were restricted;
- After payment of any outstanding debts, any remaining 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. Patrick, St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel 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 12<sup>th</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