



Prot. No. 19-005

**Decree of Extinctive Union of
St. Theresa, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Anne, St. Louis of France,
St. Alphonsus Ligouri, St. Monica, St. Brigid, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph,
St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist**

Decree of Establishment of Corpus Christi Parish

Preamble

St. Joseph Parish was established in 1689, extending from Cornwallis River to Pereaux. The first church, built in 1688-89, was in what is now Chipman's Corner. It was primarily served by the priest from the nearby Grand Pre parish. It was burned down during the expulsion of the Acadians. In the late 1830s and 1840s an influx of Irish settlers renewed the parish, and a new church was built, on the site of the present church, in 1853. The current church was built in 1892.

St. Patrick Church in Digby was completed in 1834, built by a small group of recently arrived Catholic emigrants from Ireland. The community soon outgrew the 100-seat church, and in the 1930s a new church was begun. Masses were said in the basement of the church for seven years while the community struggled to raise money to complete the building. It was eventually finished in 1941 thanks to the generosity of local lumber mills, merchants, and many parishioners.

The first St. John the Evangelist Church in Windsor was opened in 1827, and destroyed in the great Windsor fire of 1897. It was rebuilt between 1898 and 1909, though Mass was celebrated in the basement before the building's completion.

St. Louis of France church was built in Annapolis Royal to replace a much earlier church that was burned during the Acadian Expulsion. It was completed in 1835, with the first Mass celebrated in November of that year. It was a mission church until 1878. The present building was completed in 1912 and given the name of St. Thomas, although Mass was celebrated as early as 1910 in the unfinished church. Following its golden anniversary, in 1962 the church name was returned to St Louis of France.

St. Alphonsus Liguori Church in Bridgetown opened in 1874, after many years of Masses being celebrated in parishioners' homes. The church was used until 1986, when a larger replacement building was begun. The new church was completed in time for Christmas Eve Mass of that year.

St. Brigid Church in East Dalhousie was opened in 1891. It became a mission of Middleton when St. Monica was erected as a parish in 1959.

St. Joseph Church in Weymouth was completed in 1893. It was a mission until 1905, at which time a new extension to the church was completed, with a rectory added soon after.

St. Anne Church was established by Rev. Jean-Mandé Sigogne, a French missionary priest who came to Nova Scotia in 1799. He worked hard to get the Mi'kmaq people their own land, a chapel in which to worship, and a burial ground. The colonial government agreed in 1826 to set aside land for a reserve in Bear River. Fr. Sigogne asked for financial assistance from the governor, and in January 1831 the government granted 100 Pounds specifically towards the construction of the chapel at Bear River. The cornerstone was laid on April 19, 1831. St. Francis Xavier was initially chosen as the patron of the Church and the name of the reserve. The chapel was completed by November 1831, and was run as a mission of St. Patrick Parish in Digby. The name was later changed to St. Anne, to honour her as patron saint of the Mi'kmaq people.

St. Francis of Assisi was established in Wolfville in 1848 as a mission of Windsor. The original church, which was on the present cemetery grounds, was destroyed by a fire in 1875. Mass was celebrated in a private home for eight years, until the current church opened in 1883. When the Diocese of Yarmouth was erected in 1953, the church became a mission of St. Joseph in Kentville. St. Francis of Assisi was erected as a parish in 1959.

St. Theresa in Southville, named for St. Therese of Lisieux, was opened in 1938 as a mission of St. Joseph, Weymouth.

St. Anthony of Padua in Berwick was established in 1945, with the main church structure completed in 1956. Two side wings were later added to accommodate the growing community.

As early as 1909, Mass was celebrated in Middleton in various locations – a theatre, parishioners' homes, the local armoury, the town hall, and an arena. St. Monica's Church was begun in 1949 as a mission church of Annapolis Royal. It was erected as a parish in 1959, with East Dalhousie as its mission.

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.

The Windsor to Bridgetown (Annapolis Royal) area has been operating in many administrative and financial ways as one parish since 2016 (i.e. shared personnel and shared expenses). The Digby to Weymouth area has been operating in fact as one parish since 2009 and earlier.

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 of the Yarmouth -Valley Region on October 20, 2017, and with a larger group of Valley clergy and lay people on November 22, 2017.

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. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Louis of France, St. Monica, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist and their missions – 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 April 2019, comprising parishioners, staff, and the pastor of these parishes and their missions. This team informed and involved parishioners of all 12 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 eleven times between April and September 2019.

As well, beginning in March 2018, a series of six consultation meetings regarding a new parish structure took place in the various church communities. Topics for discussion included opportunities/constraints, communication, faith formation, sacraments, masses, finance/administration, physical structures, staffing and volunteering.

In June 2018, finance and administration representatives, transition team members, and clergy (from Windsor to Bridgetown) met several times to discuss more specifically their financial and administrative concerns and suggestions related to forming one parish. They also met with diocesan staff members for a financial presentation.

In September 2019, the pastor and transition team recommended that Corpus Christi Parish be established, comprising the former parishes of St. Theresa, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Anne, St. Louis of France, St. Alphonsus Ligouri, St. Monica, St. Brigid, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist. The recommendation included the retention of St. Theresa, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Anne, St. Louis of France, St. Alphonsus Ligouri, St. Monica, St. Brigid, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist churches as worship spaces.

Whereas the parishioners of all 12 communities were all invited to provide recommendations about the diocesan reconfiguration generally and their own parish merger specifically;

Whereas Rev. John MacPherson, pastor of St. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Louis of France, St. Monica, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist and their missions, submitted a letter to me dated September 30, 2019 requesting the above merger;

Whereas the Council of Priests was apprised of the situation of these 12 communities on December 6, 2018 and the Council agreed with the proposal for these 12 communities, effective January 1, 2020. Additionally, on October 31, 2019 the Council voted unanimously on a specific motion to create the new parish of Corpus Christi;

Whereas the spiritual needs of the parishioners of the 12 communities have been closely considered and can 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. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Louis of France, St. Monica, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist and their missions will be merged to create one parish, called Corpus Christi.

I furthermore decree as follows:

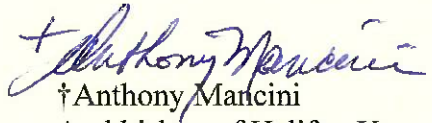
- The territory that composed the former parishes and their missions will henceforth compose the territory of the new parish;
- St. Theresa, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Anne, St. Louis of France, St. Alphonsus Ligouri, St. Monica, St. Brigid, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist churches 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).

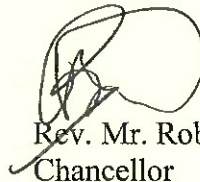
Anyone who feels aggrieved by these decrees may have recourse following the appropriate procedures outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* (Canon 1734).

It is my hope and prayer that the parishioners of these communities 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 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