

Dionysius



Josephus

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA

EPISCOPUS CAMDENSIS

DECREE

OF THE MERGER OF SAINT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA PARISH, CAMDEN INTO SACRED HEART PARISH, CAMDEN

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that a parish is “the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ’s saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love...” (CCC, 2179)

Mindful of these critical roles of a parish in the life of Catholics; and also that a parish is tremendously meaningful and involved with the “certain community of the Christian faithful” for which it is constituted within the diocese; (cf. Can. 515, §1) it is only with careful study, sincere consideration, and prayer before the Eyes of God that a diocesan bishop makes a decision to alter parishes within the local church of the Diocese which has been entrusted to his care to shepherd along with the cooperation of diocesan presbyterate. (cf. Can. 369)

Furthermore, when an alteration of parishes is deemed necessary in the see city of the Diocese itself, there is then a heightened sense of the importance of what must be accomplished; and from that a just augmentation of the study, consideration, and consultation before a final decision is made and promulgated.

The conditions in the City of Camden have changed significantly throughout the years since the establishment of its various parishes; and at times, for just causes since the founding of the Diocese of Camden, my predecessors deemed it necessary to suppress or merge certain parishes within the City of Camden in the years 1973, 1989, and 2010.

Still, in recent years it has continued to become evident that certain parishes struggle in carrying out the work for which they had been established. Each of the individual parishes is unique and has adapted, insofar as possible, to conditions which challenge the work of the Church in the City of Camden such as significant demographic and population shifts, a reduction in the number of resident and practicing Catholics within Camden, a corresponding decrease in revenue to support the work of the parishes in Camden, a reduction in the availability of clergy, and other conditions and trends which are either applicable to all of Camden; or to the particular circumstances of the individual parishes within Camden.

The following just causes therefore, support the merger of Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish into Sacred Heart Parish:

- 1) to provide more effectively for the pastoral needs of the people in the given area of the City of Camden;
- 2) to assure the vitality of parish life in this area;
- 3) to provide for a better stewardship of resources; and,
- 4) to provide for the optimum use of clergy and lay personnel.

Accordingly, having judged that sufficient just causes are present and that the good of souls will not be thereby impaired; and having consulted and heard the opinion of the Presbyteral Council in accord with canon 515, §2 at a meeting held on June 22, 2017 in which the members deliberated, thoroughly and in depth and then voted unanimously to recommend to me that I decree this merger;

And furthermore, having heard the opinions of a special ad hoc committee made up of both clergy and lay representation of the parishes of the City of Camden; which, along with diocesan officials and the local vicar forane, met for a period of over a year, from November of 2015 to March of 2017;

In virtue of the precepts of canons 121 and 515, §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, in order to provide more effectively for the spiritual welfare and the salvation of souls,

I HEREBY DECREE

The merger of Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish (civilly incorporated as St. Josephine Bakhita Parish), Camden into Sacred Heart Parish (civilly incorporated as The Church of the Sacred Heart), Camden.

The boundaries of Sacred Heart Parish are hereby altered to the following:

Start at the point the Newton Creek flows into the Delaware River.

1. East along the Newton Creek to its point of intersection with the Pennsylvania Reading Seashore Line train tracks
2. Northwest on the Pennsylvania Reading Seashore Line train tracks to its point of intersection with the North Branch of the Newton Creek
3. North along the North Branch of Newton Creek to its point of intersection with Mt. Ephraim Avenue
4. North on Mt. Ephraim Avenue to Ferry Avenue
5. Southeast on Ferry Avenue to Hollowell Lane
6. West on Hollowell Lane to Sayre Avenue

7. Northeast on Sayre Avenue to Davis St
8. Northwest on Davis St. to Copeland Street
9. Northeast on Copeland Street to its point of intersection with the PATCO High Speed Line
10. Southeast along the PATCO High Speed Line to its point of intersection with Ferry Avenue
11. Northeast on Ferry Avenue to Haddon Avenue
12. East on Haddon Avenue to Crescent Boulevard
13. North on Crescent Boulevard to its point of intersection with Cooper River
14. Northeast along the Cooper River to its point of intersection with Kaighns Avenue
15. West on Kaighns Avenue to Haddon Avenue
16. Southeast on Haddon Avenue to Atlantic Street
17. West on Atlantic Street to 9th Street
18. North on 9th Street to Mt. Vernon Street
19. West on Mt. Vernon Street and its imaginary extension to the Delaware River
20. South along the bank of the Delaware River to the point that it meets Newton Creek (point of origin)

The Parkside neighborhood of Camden, formally assigned to Sacred Heart Parish, will now be assigned to the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, in whose boundaries Saint Joseph’s Catholic Church, which is situated in the Parkside neighborhood, will be located.

Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish, as it was established as the personal parish for the African American Catholic Community in the County of Camden is hereby suppressed. Nevertheless, I instruct that an apostolate for African American Catholics, as the successor of the ministry done at Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish and before that Saint Bartholomew Parish; be transferred, situated, and coordinated from Sacred Heart Parish.

The Reverend Monsignor Michael J. Doyle will continue to serve as the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

The Reverend Gerard C. Marable will serve as pastor in *solidum* and moderator according to the precept of canon 517, §1 commencing on the effective date of this DECREE.

The parochial church of Sacred Heart Parish is located at 1739 Ferry Avenue, Camden. The other churches of the parish, which retain their proper titles, are Saint Bartholomew church, located at 751 Kaighns Avenue, Camden and Saint Joan of Arc church, located at 3107 Alabama Road, Camden.

The goods and property of Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish, including its real estate and buildings, as well as its debts and obligations, shall be assigned to Sacred Heart Parish according to the precepts of canons 121 and 123; always having observed before else the intention of the founders and donors according to the norms of the same canons.

As of the effective date of this DECREE, the sacramental registers of Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish shall be closed and transferred to Sacred Heart Parish. All sacraments administered from that date forward will be recorded in the sacramental registers of Sacred Heart Parish.

This DECREE becomes effective on July 31, 2017.

If a person considers himself or herself aggrieved by this administrative DECREE, that person is within his or her canonical rights to seek revocation or emendation according to the norm of canon 1734 and to make hierarchical recourse according to the norm of canon 1737.

I instruct that this DECREE be communicated immediately to the parishioners of Saint Josephine Bakhita Parish and Sacred Heart Parish by their respective pastors. This DECREE is likewise to be published immediately on the diocesan website and in the next printing of the Catholic Star Herald. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Camden, on this 23rd day of June, in the Year of Our Lord, 2017.

James J. Sullivan

Bishop of Camden

in cuius fide,

John A. Balth
Chancellor