

Dionysius



Josephus

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATA  
EPISCOPUS CAMDENSIS

## DECREE OF THE MERGER OF SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA PARISH, CAMDEN INTO SAINT JOSEPH PRO-CATHEDRAL 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 Anthony of Padua Parish into Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral 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 prescripts 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 Anthony of Padua Parish (civilly incorporated as St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church), Camden into Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral Parish (civilly incorporated as St. Joseph’s Catholic Church), Camden.

The boundaries of Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral Parish are hereby altered to the following:

Start at the point where the Cooper River flows into the Delaware River

1. Northeast along the bank of the Delaware River to its point of intersection with the foot of 36th Street
2. Southeast on 36th Street to New Jersey Avenue
3. Northeast on New Jersey Avenue to 42nd Street
4. Southeast on 42nd Street to Camden Avenue
5. Southwest on Camden Avenue, then turning briefly southeast on 38th Street, then turning southwest again on Camden Avenue to 36th Street
6. Southeast on 36th Street to Federal Street
7. Northeast on Federal Street to Crescent Boulevard
8. Southwest on Crescent Boulevard to Myrtle Avenue
9. Southwest on Myrtle Avenue to Highland Avenue
10. Southwest on Highland Avenue to Marlton Pike
11. Northwest on Marlton Pike to Rosemont Avenue
12. Southwest on Rosemont Avenue and its imaginary extension to the Cooper River
13. North along the Cooper River to its point of intersection with the Delaware River (point of origin)

The Reverend Jaime E. Hostios will continue to serve as the pastor of Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral Parish.

The parochial church of Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral Parish is located at 2907 Federal Street, Camden. The other church of the parish, which retains its proper title, is Saint Anthony of Padua church, located at 2818 River Road, Camden.

The goods and property of Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, including its real estate and buildings, as well as its debts and obligations, shall be assigned to Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral Parish according to the prescripts 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 Anthony of Padua Parish shall be closed and transferred to Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral Parish. All sacraments administered from that date forward will be recorded in the sacramental registers of Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral 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 Anthony of Padua Parish and Saint Joseph Pro-Cathedral 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 fidem,*

*James J. Sullivan*  
Chancellor