

DECREE

Merging Saint Albert Parish in West Stewartstown, New Hampshire, and Saint Brendan Parish, in Colebrook, New Hampshire, including Saint Pius X Mission in Errol, New Hampshire and Saint William of York Chapel in Dixville Notch, New Hampshire

Saint Albert Parish has served the Catholic faithful of Stewartstown, West Stewartstown, Clarksville and Pittsburgh since 1926, and since 1995 the pastor of Saint Albert Parish has served the parishioners of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Canaan, Vermont. Saint Brendan Parish, including Saint Pius X Mission and Saint William of York Chapel, has served the Catholic faithful of Colebrook, Dixville Notch and Errol since 1953. During that time, many people have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and have received the sacraments of the Church in these parishes. Now, in an effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life, with concern for the best stewardship of resources and the right of the people of God to receive assistance from the Church, especially the Word of God, spiritual sustenance and the sacraments, it is necessary to make new provisions for the spiritual care of the parishioners of these parishes.

To that end, having asked parishioners to make known their needs and desires, having received the recommendations of Cluster Task Force Number Thirty, consisting of the pastors from the parishes and two liaisons from each of the parishes, after consultation with the Dean of the White Mountain Deanery, the Long Range Planning Commission, the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Manchester, and the Diocesan Finance Council, and in accord with canons 121, 515 §2 and 518 of the *1983 Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Merge Saint Albert Parish in West Stewartstown, New Hampshire, and Saint Brendan Parish in Colebrook, New Hampshire, including Saint Pius X Mission in Errol, and Saint William of York Chapel in Dixville Notch to form one territorial parish. The merger shall take effect at midnight at the end of Sunday, October 7, 2007. This merged parish shall include the parish communities of the former Saint Albert Parish and the former Saint Brendan Parish, including Saint Pius X Mission and Saint William of York Chapel, and shall encompass the territory delineated by the two former parishes. The existing church edifice of each of the former parishes and Saint Pius X Mission and Saint William of York Chapel will remain the sites of worship for the merged parish community, until such time that the pastor, with the advice of his parish pastoral and finance council, and with my consent, determines otherwise.

2. Establish that the name of the new parish be **North American Martyrs Parish**, but that the names of the current Saint Albert Church edifice, Saint Brendan Church edifice, Saint Pius X Mission Church edifice and Saint William of York Chapel shall remain unchanged.
3. Establish that, in accord with canon 519, a pastor will be appointed by decree to foster the pastoral care of **North American Martyrs Parish**.

This decision is based upon a number of components, among them the spiritual welfare of the parish communities, the spread of the Gospel, the fostering of unity of the People of God in the White Mountain Deanery, the enhancement of collaborative ministry, and the best use of available priest personnel.

All parish registers containing the records of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage, and deaths preserved at Saint Albert Parish and Saint Brendan Parish will be transferred to **North American Martyrs Parish** office at 55 Pleasant Street in Colebrook, where they will be faithfully preserved in accord with canon 535, §§1-5. According to the norm of canon 121, all assets, whether movable or immovable, including Saint Albert Cemetery, Saint Brendan Cemetery, and Saint Pius Forest Lawn Cemetery and all liabilities of the two former parishes will become the assets and liabilities of **North American Martyrs Parish**. Furthermore, ownership of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former two parishes will be transferred to **North American Martyrs Parish** and will be administered in accordance with the prescriptions of Church law.

The merger of Saint Albert Parish and Saint Brendan Parish will terminate the juridic personality of each of the former parishes, which they now possess by law, and no longer will they be the subjects in canon law of obligations and rights corresponding to their nature as juridic persons, nor will they be capable of acquiring, retaining, administering, or alienating temporal goods according to the norm of law.

I direct that this Decree be given to the pastor of Saint Albert Parish and Saint Brendan Parish, and that this information, as well as the “Manner of Initiating Hierarchical Recourse” against this Decree, be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, October 6, 2007 and Sunday, October 7, 2007.

Given at Manchester this 26th day of September, 2007.

/s/ + John B. McCormack
Bishop of Manchester

/s/ Edward J. Arsenault
Moderator of the Curia