



Prot. no. PSH 19.01

MARK
Bishop of Shrewsbury

The Parish of St Columba & St Theresa, Chester

*DECREE of MERGER (by extinctive union) of the two PARISHES of
(a) St Columba and (b) St Theresa (both in Chester),
in order to form one new parish of St Columba and St Theresa, Chester*

Whereas the two parishes of (a) St Columba, Plas Newton Lane, Chester, CH2 1PL, and (b) St Theresa, Blacon Avenue, Chester, CH1 5BU (together hereinafter referred to as 'the Merging Parishes') have each, for some years, served the Catholic faithful and wider population of their respective areas, during which time, many have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and have received the Sacraments of the Church in their respective parish communities;

and whereas the Merging Parishes have, since 2016, been served by one Priest, resident at St Columba's, Plas Newton;

and whereas the Bishop of the Diocese is concerned for the best stewardship of resources and of the right of the People of God to receive assistance from the Church (especially the Word of God, spiritual sustenance and the Sacraments) normatively from their own parish priest (cc. 527-530);

and whereas the two communities of Christ's faithful of the Merging Parishes have been engaged in recent times in a common effort to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and 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;

and whereas a merger of the two parishes was proposed and the parishioners have been asked to make known their needs and desires and their responses have been carefully considered;

and whereas, in so far as possible, all those whose rights could be injured have been heard, the presumed intentions of founders and of substantial benefactors have been respected and no acquired rights are proposed to be transgressed;

and whereas all relevant information was placed, with the proposal for merger, at the 103rd meeting of the Council of Priests (can. 515 §2), lawfully convened on 8th March, 2017, at which the respective advantages and disadvantages of the proposal were open for free

discussion and advice (as is recorded in paragraph 12 A. of the minutes of that meeting), and the opinions of the members of that Council were heard.

NOW I, MARK, BISHOP OF SHREWSBURY under and in accordance with canons 120 §1, 121, and 515 §§2-3 of the Code of Canon Law 1983 HEREBY DECREE as follows:

Reconfiguration of parishes

1. The above-named Merging Parishes shall be modified by extinctive union, so that each of the Merging Parishes is extinguished in such a way that, from them, one, new parish is constituted (c 121).
2. Such merger shall take place at midnight on the date of this decree (hereinafter the “Date of Merger”).
3. The new territorial parish constituted by this merger and hereby erected shall be known as the “Parish of the St Columba & St Theresa, Chester” (hereinafter referred to as ‘the New Parish’).
4. The boundaries of the New Parish encompass the territorial areas covered by the Merging Parishes.

Reasons

5. The just cause for this decree and matter requiring its implementation (assessed in accordance with ecclesiastical jurisprudence) comprises the promotion of the good of souls in the current parishes in Chester and its neighbourhood. Relevant factors have included the reasonable proximity of the communities and their respective churches, the fostering of unity and the enhancement of collaboration in order to make more effective the life and mission of the Church in that area, the best use of priests available for appointment to serve the people and help achieve those ends, and the spiritual and pastoral welfare of the parish communities.

Membership of new parish

6. The membership of community of Christ’s faithful comprising the New Parish shall include the membership of the Merging Parishes.

Parish priest

7. Father Jonathan Brandon is hereby appointed Parish Priest of the New Parish. (c. 519).

Churches

8. Each current church building situated in the territory of the New Parish shall be a place of worship for the unified parish community. The name of each church's dedication shall remain unchanged. Any liturgical rites for the proper functioning of the New Parish may be celebrated at either of those churches to meet the pastoral needs of the community, as necessary.

Effect on status and canonical personality of the Merging Parishes

9. The merger (*unio extinctiva*) effected by this decree suppresses and terminates the juridic personality of each of the Merging Parishes. Therefore, they shall cease to be juridic persons and shall cease to be the subject in canon law of obligations and rights. In particular, they shall no longer be capable of acquiring, retaining, administering, or alienating temporal goods according to the norm of law.

Effect on assets of Merging Parishes

10. In accordance with the norm of canon 121, all of the goods and patrimonial rights proper to the Merging Parishes (and any obligations with which they may be burdened) together with all of their existing assets and liabilities, whether movable or immovable, shall from the Date of Merger *ipso iure* become the property, rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the New Parish. Furthermore, possession and ownership of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the Merging Parishes, and each of them, shall be transferred to the New Parish and shall be administered in accordance with the prescriptions of Canon law with due regard for the intention of benefactors (cf. canon 1284 §2.3) and without prejudice to any acquired rights.

Registers

11. Before 1st September, 2019, proposals shall be put by the parish priest of the New Parish to the Chancellor of the Diocese with regard to the parochial registers containing the records of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage, and deaths preserved at the merging parishes, with a view to securing their faithful preservation and maintenance. Any existing registers, records and historical documents not needed for the continuing administration of the new parish should be forwarded to the Diocesan Archives.

12. Parochial registers, in accordance with canon 535, §§1-5, relating to the new parish shall be held and maintained at such appropriate and secure place as the parish priest may from time to time determine.

Promulgation, publication, and notification

13. I direct that this decree be delivered to Father Jonathan Brandon as parish priest of the new parish and that notice of its contents be publicly communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday and Sunday 20th and 21st July, 2019. I further direct that the full text of this decree be published on the website of the Diocese of Shrewsbury (<http://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/>).

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at my diocesan curial offices under my hand and curial seal this 16th day of July, 2019.

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The Rt Rev Mark Davies
Bishop of Shrewsbury

LS
Fr Thomas Cunnah
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The Rev'd Fr Thomas Cunnah
Vice-chancellor

