

DECREE

Suppressing Saint Anthony Parish in West Swanzey, New Hampshire

And Unifying It with

Saint Bernard Parish in Keene, New Hampshire

Saint Anthony Parish has served the Catholic faithful of West Swanzey since 1958. During that time, many people have heard the Word of God, have worshiped and received the sacraments of the Church in this parish. 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, the sacraments, and the continuation of important parochial ministries to the elderly, families, and children, it is necessary to make new provisions for the spiritual care of the parishioners of this parish.

To that end, having asked parishioners to make known their needs and desires, having received the recommendations of the Parish Councils and Finance Councils of Saint Anthony Parish in West Swanzey and Saint Bernard Parish in Keene, after consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Manchester and the Diocesan Finance Council, and in accord with canon 515 §2 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby:

1. Suppress Saint Anthony Parish in West Swanzey, New Hampshire and unite it with Saint Bernard Parish in Keene, New Hampshire to form one territorial parish. The suppression and unification shall take effect at midnight at the end of Saturday, July 10, 2004. This unified parish shall include the membership of the present Saint Bernard Parish and the former Saint Anthony Parish, and the current Saint Bernard Church edifice shall be the place of worship for the unified parish community.

2. Establish that the name of the present Saint Bernard Parish shall remain unchanged, and the name of the current Saint Bernard Church edifice shall remain unchanged.

This decision is based upon a number of components, including a decline in the Catholic worshipping community in the Keene/West Swanzey area, the proximity of the worshipping communities and the churches, the size of the parishes, the desire to avoid duplication of services and programs in a small geographic area, the fostering of unity, 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 Anthony Parish shall be transferred to the present Saint Bernard Parish where they will be faithfully preserved in accord with canon 535, §§1-5; and according to the norm of canon 121, all assets, whether movable or immovable, and all liabilities of Saint Anthony Parish, upon this suppression and unification, will become the assets and liabilities of the present Saint Bernard Parish. Furthermore, possession of all ecclesiastical goods and all objects of artistic or historical value belonging to the former Saint Anthony Parish shall be transferred to the present Saint Bernard Parish and shall be administered in accordance with canons 1189 and 1292.

The unification of Saint Anthony Parish and Saint Bernard Parish will suppress and terminate the juridic personality of Saint Anthony Parish, which it now possesses by law. Therefore, Saint Anthony Parish shall be no longer the subject in canon law of obligations and rights corresponding to its nature as a juridic person. In addition, said Saint Anthony Parish shall be capable no longer of acquiring, retaining, administering, and alienating temporal goods according to the norm of law.

I direct that this Decree be given to the pastor of Saint Anthony Parish in West Swanzey, New Hampshire, who is the current pastor of Saint Bernard Parish in Keene, New Hampshire, and that this information be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, July 10, 2004 and Sunday, July 11, 2004.

Given at Manchester this eighth day of July 2004.

/s/ John B. McCormack
Bishop of Manchester

/s/ Edward J. Arsenault
Chancellor