



EARL BOYEA

EPISCOPUS LANSINGENSIS
DIVINA MISERATIONE ET APOSTOLICA SEDIS GRATIA

DECREE TO MERGE SAINTS CORNELIUS AND CYPRIAN PARISH IN BUNKER HILL TOWNSHIP (LESLIE), WITH SAINT JAMES PARISH IN MASON

In February 1845, Fr. Patrick O'Kelly from Livingston County, celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the home of the James Markey family, the first Mass in Bunker Hill Township. Subsequently, in 1857, when Fr. Cornelius Moutard was named pastor of Saint John the Evangelist, Jackson, he was also entrusted with the pastoral care of the faithful in this area, principally composed of Irish immigrants and their families. In November 1868, having petitioned the coadjutor Bishop of Detroit, Peter Paul Lefevre, this Catholic community was sent its first resident priest, Fr. Theodore Hilary Driessen. However, Bunker Hill lost its parochial status in 1873 and it remained a mission for next thirty-two years, under the care of the pastors of Saint Mary, Pinckney; Saint John the Evangelist, Jackson; and Saint Mary, Williamston. During the pastorate (1898-1905) of Fr. John J. Connolly of Williamston, the community experienced expansion. Despite conflagrations that destroyed both the church and the rectory, the new resident pastor, Fr James O'Brien, oversaw not only the rebuilding of a new church (1907) and rectory (1910), but also a school was constructed (1912). The school was staffed by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Nazareth, from Kalamazoo. The school closed in 1964. Thus, many generations have heard the Word of God proclaimed and preached, been nourished by the Eucharist and the other sacraments, and gathered in community frequently to celebrate their faith.

This community of the faithful has been a particular source of joy and enrichment to the Diocese of Lansing since its own foundation in 1937. Numerous vocations to the priesthood and religious life blossomed within this parish. Under the care of their pastors, parishioners have lovingly brought their children to Christ by baptism, reared them by Catholic education and catechesis, witnessed their marriages in Christ, and committed their departed to him.

Nevertheless, the number of parishioners has gradually diminished. The descendants of the immigrants and early members of the parish have moved away from the region, or if remaining, have found pastoral service in the other parishes of the area. For the sake of a united Catholic presence and due to the need to utilize both human and financial resources most effectively for the service of the Catholic population and as a witness to the entire community of central and southern Ingham County and northern Jackson County, this merger is most beneficial.

Saints Cornelius and Cyprian was clustered with Saint James in Mason in October 2015 under the pastorate of Fr. Kusitino Cobona. Since then, the pastoral staffs have been merged

and common resources for catechesis and Christian initiation have been used. After subsequent consultation, the merger of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish with Saint James Parish has been deemed the best course to follow.

This provision was based upon a combination of factors. These factors included the decline in the Catholic worshipping community in Bunker Hill, the reasonable access to Saint James Parish nearby (12.6 miles away), the desire to avoid duplication of services, the spiritual welfare of both of the parish communities of the central and southern Ingham County and northern Jackson County area, the more effective spread of the Gospel, the promotion of unity among the People of God, the enhancement of collaborative ministry and the better utilization of the decreasing number of priests.

Thus, to strengthen the preaching of the Gospel and to ensure the vitality of parish life in the area, 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 take particular action for the spiritual care of the parishioners of this parish and the good of the diocese. Indeed, this action is motivated principally by concern for souls (*Christus Dominus*, no. 32) and required for the good of the faithful (*Apostolorum Successores*, no. 214).

On May 30, 2018, the Parish Council of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish, after consultation with their Pastor, Fr. Kusitino Cobona, who seeks this for the just cause of the unity of Catholic witness and for the good of the faithful, requested the merger of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish with Saint James Parish designating Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Church as an oratory.

This matter was brought to the Diocesan Pastoral Council as part of its regular planning process on February 1, 2018, and the members unanimously affirmed such a status for Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Church once the parishes were ready to move in that direction. As the norm of universal law requires, I have now consulted the Presbyteral Council on this matter (June 5, 2018). Its members were polled individually and unanimous support was given both for the merger of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish to Saint James Parish and the change of status for Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Church to an oratory.

Therefore, attentive to canons 120, §1, 121 and 515 §§2-3, as well as the "Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes, the Closure or Relegation of Churches to Profane but not Sordid Use, and the Alienation of the Same" (Congregation for the Clergy, p.n. 2013-1348, April 30, 2013), by virtue of my authority and responsibility as Bishop of Lansing, I hereby decree:

That the parish of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, Leslie, Michigan, be merged (*unio extinctiva*) with Saint James Parish, Mason, Michigan (cf. can. 121). The consolidated community, comprising Saint James Church and the Oratory of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, shall be named **The Catholic Community of Saints James, Cornelius and Cyprian**.

The Reverend Father Kusitino Cobona, current pastor of Saint James, shall remain as pastor of the consolidated parish. He is to foster the pastoral care of the Catholic faithful entrusted to him, bearing in mind the provisions of canon 519.

The ownership of all the ecclesiastical goods of the former Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish, which include all its assets and liabilities, is now transferred to The Catholic Community of Saints James, Cornelius and Cyprian under the administration of its pastor. He is to see, in consultation with the diocesan finance officer, that all steps necessary to preserve civilly valid ownership of these goods are taken.

The current church of Saint James shall be the principal place of worship of the consolidated parish. The sacred edifice of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, while retaining its title, is now designated as an oratory according to the provisions of canons 1223-1225, and will be the auxiliary place of worship for the Catholic Community of Saints James, Cornelius and Cyprian. Any liturgical rites for the proper functioning of the parish may be celebrated at the oratory to meet the pastoral needs of the faithful, as necessary according to the judgment of its pastor.

Before July 1, 2018, the parish registers of the former Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish containing the records of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage and deaths as well as parish records and historical documents are to be entrusted to the parish office at the principal worship site in Mason, in a manner determined by the pastor, where they will be faithfully preserved and maintained in accord with canon 535 §1-5. Any registers, records and historical documents that are not required for the continued administration of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Oratory and the adjoining complex are to be forwarded to the Diocesan Archives.

This decree shall take effect July 1, 2018.

Prior to the effective date of this decree, I direct that it be given to the pastoral leadership of the present Saints Cornelius and Cyprian Parish and the present Saint James Parish, and that its contents, especially the dispositive part of this decree, be communicated to parishioners of both parishes on the weekend of Saturday, June 16, 2018, and Sunday, June 17, 2018. This may be effected by printing in the bulletin of each parish, or by posting in a public space of each parish church: The "Process to Initiate Recourse against an Administrative Decree" is to be made available as needed.

I further direct that this decree be published on the website of the Diocese of Lansing (www.dioceseoflansing.org) which will be presumed the official notification of this action (cf. canon 8 §2).

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Curia of the Diocese of Lansing on this the 8th day of June, in the year of our Lord, 2018, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Michael Andrews

Mr. Michael Andrews
Chancellor



Earl Boyea

Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing

Process to Recourse Against a Decree

THE PROCESS TO INITIATE RECOURSE AGAINST AN ADMINISTRATIVE DECREE

The process to initiate a recourse against administrative decrees, such as the establishment, merger, modification or suppression of a parish is found in Book VII, Part V, Section 1 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. The principle expressed by the Code itself is that there be no contention between one who feels injured and the author of the decree (cf. canon 1733). If it is necessary to propose a recourse against a decree issued by the bishop or by authorities subject to him the following points may be of assistance.

1. The pastor alone represents the parish in all juridic affairs (cf. canon 532). Only the pastor may propose recourse in the name of the parish. Individuals may not claim to represent the parish, nor can groups of individuals claim to represent the parish in proposing recourse. An individual may propose recourse only in his or her own name. Similarly, a group of individuals may propose recourse collectively, but representing themselves and no others. They may not claim to represent a larger group, or the entire parish.
2. Canon 1734 establishes that, before proposing hierarchic recourse (petition for examination of a decree by the proper Dicastery of the Holy See), one must seek revocation or emendation of the decree. This must be done in writing, to the author of the decree, within a peremptory period of ten (10) working days from legal notice of the decree. Accordingly, prior to the close of business on the tenth (10th) working day after legal notice of the decree, a written request for Bishop Boyea to revoke or amend the decree must be sent or delivered to:

Most Reverend Earl Boyea, DD
Diocese of Lansing
228 N Walnut St
Lansing MI 48933

- a. Requests must state exactly what is being petitioned, and the reasons why.
 - b. Requests that are not specific as to what is sought or why, will not be accepted and will not be considered as delaying the initial ten (10) day limit.
 - c. Requests for an extension of time will not be honored.
 - d. Requests sent by facsimile (fax) will not be accepted.
3. If a valid request for revocation or emendation of a decree is received within the ten (10) day time limit, Bishop Boyea has thirty (30) days from receipt of the petition to decide his response. If no response is given in thirty (30) days, a negative response is to be assumed (cf. canon 1735).
 4. If after a legitimate petition has been presented, Bishop Boyea does not amend or revoke the initial decree, hierarchic recourse may be proposed to the Holy See. This must be done within a peremptory time limit of fifteen (15) working days. This recourse cannot validly be proposed unless one has first written to Bishop Boyea to ask him to revoke or amend the decree, as in Number 2 above. This recourse is to be made in writing, along with the reasons for seeking recourse, to the proper Dicastery of the Holy See.