Most Reverend John Joseph Myers
By the Grace of God and the Favor of the Apostolic See
Archbishop of Newark

DEGREE OF EXTINCTIVE UNION (MERGER)

In order to serve more effectively the spiritual and pastoral needs of a portion of the community of the faithful formerly belonging to the Parishes of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Immaculate Conception, both located in Montclair (Deanery 16) in the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ, and thus seek to ensure a long-term viability and presence of the Church in this area of the Archdiocese, it has been determined that a new Parish be erected, resulting from the extintive merging of the two aforementioned Parishes.

Such determination has been reached subsequent to a period of consultation and deliberation with appropriate individuals and agencies, and is justified by historical developments and reasoning.

During the first semester of 2004 the Archdiocese of Newark inaugurated the New Energies Parish Initiative, a project to evaluate the vitalities of the Parishes of the Archdiocese and to strategize for improved, innovative and sustainable utilization of ministerial, human and economic resources.

All Parishes of the Archdiocese of Newark were to be involved in this self-evaluation and transformation. Parishioner groups commissioned in each parish measured their current parish life against 28 principles identified by the New Energies Task Force as benchmarks of a thriving Parish environment. These principles embraced all the aspects of the life of a Parish, including: Spiritual Life, Education and Formational Life, Catechetical Programs, Life of Service, Parish Community Life, Administrative Life, and Pastoral Life Ministry. Initially, the Initiative focused particularly on parishes in geographic areas where demographical changes (concerning, in particular, the density of the Catholic population) had impacted dramatically the ministerial life of the parishes.

By July 2005, all Parishes of the Archdiocese were incorporated into the initiative and invited to partner among themselves in a constructive dialogue for a better ministerial attention to their areas. Each grouping of parishes was to form a Core Team of parishioner members from the different parishes involved to develop avenues of partnership among Parishes. These avenues were to be based on models of collaboration and recommendations for areas of concern prepared and provided by the Archdiocesan New Energies Task Force. In the year 2007 the Parishes of Mount Carmel, of Immaculate Conception and St. Peter Claver in Montclair
clustered together, with my approval (May 27, 2007). The Core Team of the aforementioned Parishes, consisting of clerics and parishioners who were actively involved in the ministerial life, were charged with initiating a dialogue on developing partnership for Parish ministries, coordinating evangelization efforts and sharing resources.

An area of particular concern in this cluster had been, and continues to be, declines in the visible participation by the faithful in the ministerial life in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. According to official statistics of the Archdiocese of Newark, between the year 1995 and 2015 the number of Families registered in the Parish declined by half (from 765 to 393), the number of Parishioners declined by two-thirds (from 2303 to 760), and the number of attendees at weekly Mass declined by two-thirds (from 672 to 222). Significant declines also were registered in terms of Baptism (from 32 to 8), First Communions (from 15 to 7), Confirmations (from 21 to 2), Funerals (from 56 to 28) and Marriages (from 15 to 1). Only 20 children participated in the Parish Religious Education program in the most recent period.

Immaculate Conception Parish also experienced some declines as well during this same period. The number of Parishioners fell by a quarter (from 3,000 to 2,200), and weekly Mass attendance fell by about one-third (from 857 to 537). At the same time, more than 300 children participated in the Parish Religious Education program in the most recent period. The Parish also recorded 48 Baptisms, 51 First Communions, 31 Confirmations, and 19 Marriages in the most recent period.

These realities suggest strongly that it is untenable to continue to operate fully two separate Parishes in the same geographic area with two separate staffs.

The matter is not financial. Rather, it is prompted by significant dwindling in community life in the Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Participation in the New Energies Parish Initiative by Our Lady of Mount Carmel at the appropriate time more than 10 years ago might have revitalized the parish through a cooperative joining of strengths and the summoning of talents of both communities. Today, however, in recognition of the enumerated declines, such a revitalization can be effected best through a merger of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish with the Parish of Immaculate Conception.

The Churches belonging to these two former Parishes are, physically, less than 15 minutes walking distance from one another, and less than one mile (0.7) apart. Such close proximity allows for a unified staff to serve both Churches easily. In fact, as a result of this amalgamation, it is my intention that the Churches of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Immaculate Conception both keep their original names and remain open for as long as it is possible and beneficial to its members. Both former Parishes of Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Mount Carmel have a common cultural and ethnic background, as well as traditions, that will be preserved in the newly erected Parish of Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

The dedication to soon-to-be Saint Teresa of Calcutta intends to honor in a timely manner a prominent figure of the Church who was often present in the Archdiocese of Newark and whose congregation is highly represented in this Archdiocese.
Consequently, by virtue of my authority as Archbishop of Newark, and having consulted with the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council on March 10, 2016, as stipulated by canon 515 - § 2 of the Code of Canon Law, having in mind the good of the souls (Christus Dominus, no. 32), after a long time of prayerful consideration of all the interests and concerns involved in this matter,

I DECREE

that the Parish of Saint Teresa of Calcutta be ERECTED as of September 4, 2016. The Parish, with legal address located at 30 North Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042, is to provide for the faithful formerly belonging to the merged Parishes of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Immaculate Conception, for all newcomers in the area, and all those Catholics who wish to worship in the newly-erected Parish.

The Parish of Saint Teresa of Calcutta will assume the assets, obligations, liabilities and rights, both temporal and spiritual, of the merged Parishes.

This Decree will be effective upon notification to the interested Parishes and will remain effective until specifically rescinded. The notification to the parishioners will be executed by reading its text during the Saturday and Sunday liturgies on the weekend of July 23 and 24, 2016 and publishing it in the Parish bulletins on the same weekend.

Given at Newark, New Jersey
Given on July 19, 2016

[Archbishop's seal]

* Most Reverend John J. Myers
Archbishop of Newark

[Reverend Monsignor's seal]

Reverend Monsignor Michael A. Andreano, V.G.
Vicar General and Chancellor

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