



Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Providence
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Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 278-4546

DECREE IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Since 1846, St. Charles Borromeo Parish has served the Irish Catholic faithful in the city of Woonsocket. However, in later years, the parish has seen a marked decrease in population and has endured a decline in ordinary income due to those changing demographics. Since the 2016 retirement of its last full-time pastor, the parish has shared its parish administrator with a neighboring parish. Attempts to consolidate ministries or merge resources with area parishes have been largely unsuccessful. Total registered families have declined from 190 in 2012 to approximately 90. Total weekend Mass attendance has decreased from approximately 230 in 2012 to approximately 90 for both remaining weekend Masses. From 2015-2018, there were just 37 baptisms (many of which were performed for non-parishioners); two children received First Communion; there were 17 Confirmations; and no weddings. Since 2016, there is no record of any baptism at St. Charles for a registered St. Charles parishioner. Parish records show that, since 2012, only two children have received First Penance and First Communion.

As parishioners and sacramental life continue to dwindle, virtually all parish activity has ceased. It is highly unlikely that these trends will reverse. Currently, there are seven other Catholic parishes within the city of Woonsocket.

Additionally, impending costs related to the church building are overwhelming. A conservative estimate for the projected cost for the long-term replacement of the church roof was \$140,000; likewise, conservative estimates for the total renovations of the church's heating system and stained-glass windows exceeded \$200,000, and \$232,000, respectively. Over the past five years, annual parish income has plummeted by nearly 50% to a projection of approximately \$88,000 (end of FY 2020).

These factors have converged to undermine further parish viability. Therefore, having received the request of the parish administrator and the trustees of St. Charles Borromeo Parish; having heard those affected by this request; having determined that a just cause exists; having

consulted the College of Consultors on October 10, 2019; and having consulted the Council of Priests on October 10, 2019 in accord with Canon 515, §2, I hereby decree that:

1. St. Charles Borromeo Parish, a personal parish, shall be suppressed;
2. All parish registers containing the records of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, and deaths of St. Charles Parish will continue to be maintained at All Saints Parish, Woonsocket, in accord with Canon 535, §§1-5;
3. In accord with Canon 123, the assets, debts and liabilities of St. Charles Borromeo Parish shall be assumed by the Diocese of Providence (the next higher canonical entity).

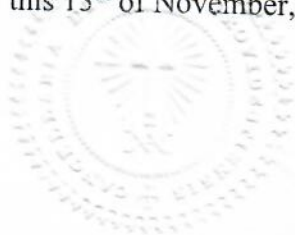
The effective date of this decree is January 13, 2020, at 12:01am.

I also direct that this decree be forwarded to the parish administrator, who will provide copies to parishioners at the weekend Masses on November 16 – 17, 2019.

Parishioners who wish to make recourse against this decree have the right to do so. According to Church law (Canon 1734, §2), they must do so **within 10 (ten) business days** of receiving notification of this decree. Any recourse must be submitted in writing via postal mail to Bishop Tobin by December 3, 2019 and must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

At this time of transition, I extend my prayerful support to all the members of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, which has been a source of stability and strength for faithful families for generations. Let us continue to rely upon God's goodness and providence as we begin a new chapter in our common journey of faith.

Given in Providence,
at the Chancery,
this 13th of November, 2019



Handwritten signature of Thomas J. Tobin in black ink.

Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Providence

Handwritten signature of Timothy D. Reilly in black ink.

(Rev.) Timothy D. Reilly
Chancellor