



DECREE

The merger of
St. James Parish of Twin Lakes, Minnesota,
with St. Theodore Parish of Albert Lea, Minnesota

St. James Parish of Twin Lakes, Minnesota, was founded in 1876, serving the faithful of the area for 147 years. In 2011 the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, with the assistance of professional consultants, embarked upon Vision 2016: a comprehensive visioning and planning process aimed at providing opportunities to enhance the pastoral care of the faithful, address shortages in clergy, and evaluate current parish structures in light of changing demographic trends. The project employed extensive collaboration among clergy and lay leaders throughout the Diocese. The insights drawn from multiple deanery level meetings, the recommendations of pastoral planning experts, and other relevant data was presented to a working committee in 2014, which subsequently recommended merging 21 of the 115 parishes, as the need would arise. The proposal was released publically on February 1, 2015, and members of the faithful of St. James Parish and St. Theodore Parish were asked to make known their needs and desires about the proposed merger. Guidance was solicited from the Presbyteral Council throughout the pastoral planning process.

On March 7, 2023, the Presbyteral Council provided consultation, in accord with canon 515, §§2, 3, concerning the proposal that St. James Parish be merged (*unio extinctiva*) into St. Theodore Parish. Upon full discussion, at which time due consideration was given to reasons for and against the proposed merger, and with opportunity to suggest alternate courses of action, members of the Presbyteral Council expressed unanimous agreement in favor of the proposed merger.

The following just causes suggest that St. James Parish be merged into St. Theodore Parish:

- 1) The declining number of faithful attending Mass and the limited quantity of additional sacramental experiences;
- 2) The enhancement of collaborative ministry and to ensure the best utilization of priest personnel;
- 3) The recent and projected shifts in populations, moving from rural to urban settings;
- 4) A consolidation of human resources directed toward strengthening the quality of the liturgy and encouraging fuller active participation;
- 5) To better effect the preaching and spread of the Gospel.
- 6) The church building was relegated on July 1, 2017 and subsequently razed.

Accordingly, in virtue of the prescription of canon 121 and 515, §2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, having judged that just causes are present, that the intentions of donors and any other

acquired rights have been examined and given due consideration, and that the good of souls will not thereby be impaired,

**I HEREBY DECREE AN EXTINCTIVE UNION BY WHICH
ST. JAMES PARISH OF TWIN LAKES, MINNESOTA
BE MERGED INTO
ST. THEODORE PARISH OF ALBERT LEA, MINNESOTA.**

Furthermore, the newly established territorial boundaries of St. Theodore Parish are to be:

Starting in the southwest corner of the parish: at the intersection of the Minnesota/Iowa border and the Freeborn/Faribault County line, head north along the Freeborn/Faribault County line to a point where a line that overlaps 245th Street intersects the Freeborn/Faribault County line. Head east along the line that overlaps 245th Street to State Highway 13. Head northward along State Highway 13 to 290th Street. Head east on 290th Street to 717th Avenue. Head north on 717th Avenue to 300th Street. Head east along a line that overlaps 300th Street to Interstate 35. Head south on Interstate 35 to a point where a line that overlaps 290th Street intersects Interstate 35. Head east along the line that overlaps 290th Street to 850th Avenue. Head south on 850th Avenue to Interstate 90. Head east on Interstate 90 to a point where a line that overlaps 870th Avenue intersects Interstate 90. Head south on the line that overlaps 870th Avenue to the Minnesota/Iowa border. Head west along the Minnesota/Iowa border to the starting point. Upon the completion of the transfer of such assets and liabilities, the civil corporation of the St. James Parish shall take such actions at civil law as are necessary to dissolve itself. Furthermore, any other patrimony, including sacramental records, deaths, and items or documents of historical or spiritual significance shall be transferred to St. Theodore Parish.

This decree becomes effective July 15, 2023. A copy of this decree is to be sent to the pastor of St. James Parish and St. Theodore Parish and its contents is to be communicated at all of the Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, June 24, 2023, and June 25, 2023. Furthermore, this decree is to be published on the diocesan website. Any legitimate party, considering himself aggrieved by this decree, retains the right to request emendation or revocation within ten (10) useful days (c. 1734 §§1, 2).

Given in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester on this twentieth day of June in the year of Our Lord 2023.

+*Robert Barron*

The Most Reverend Robert Barron
Bishop of Winona-Rochester

Rev. Michael Cronin

Chancellor



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