



The Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin, C.S.S.R.
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-236-1403

Decree

Whereas my predecessor, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, OSB, had instituted a process to assess the pastoral needs of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and

Whereas this process, known as Connected in the Spirit, was designed to consider the needs of the parishes according to deaneries; and

Whereas as it was deemed beneficial to consider the four Indianapolis deaneries, that is the North, West, South, and East deaneries, simultaneously since it was obvious that decisions concerning the parishes of any one of the deaneries would necessarily affect the parishes of the adjoining deaneries; and

Whereas as part of this process information concerning both the current condition of St. Bernadette Parish of Indianapolis, Indiana, and the pastoral needs of the people of the parish was made available to both the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and to myself as the Diocesan Bishop and Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and

Whereas the information concerning the condition of the parish and the pastoral needs of its people demonstrated that:

- since 2003, St. Bernadette Parish has experienced a significant decline in the number of parishioners;
- this trend was noticed as early as 2005, and continues unabated today, leading to the conclusion that the parish will not be viable in the future;
- while the parish was originally founded as a daughter parish of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in order to alleviate overcrowding at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish School, the St. Bernadette Parish School itself closed due to declining enrollment in the 1980s;
- the parish church was intended to serve as a gymnasium for the parish school, while a new church was to be built, but because of the closure of the parish school no new church was ever built;

- the average weekend attendance of St. Bernadette is 175 persons, while the average weekend attendance of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is 345 persons, and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish church, which seats 700 persons, could readily accommodate all of the parishioners of the two currently existing parishes;
- the merger of the parishes would enhance the faith formation and Catholic education possibilities for the children of St. Bernadette Parish.

Whereas the planning commission proposed the merger, canonically known as an extinctive union, of St. Bernadette Parish into Our Lady of Lourdes Parish; and

Whereas the unification of the parishes would allow for stronger evangelization, faith formation, and vocations programs, as well as effective administration and stewardship of the resources of the unified parish; and

Whereas, while such a unification is sufficiently justified for the reasons *in rem* related above, it also allows for a pastorally necessary allocation of limited resources and personnel, particularly priests; and

Whereas I convened the Archdiocesan Management Council and presented to the Council the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission; and

Whereas the Management Council recommended that the findings and recommendations of the Commission be accepted and implemented; and

Whereas I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese and sought its counsel concerning the manner in which the pastoral needs of the people of St. Bernadette Parish might best be addressed; and

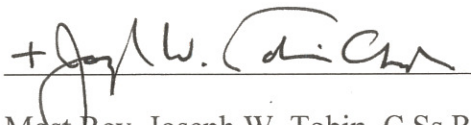
Whereas the Presbyteral Council, after fully considering the issue, recommended by unanimous vote that St. Bernadette Parish be merged into Our Lady of Lourdes Parish;

I, Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, having considered the advice of the Archdiocesan Planning Commission, the Archdiocesan Management Council, and the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, and having in mind my responsibility to best meet the spiritual needs of the people of St. Bernadette Parish of Indianapolis in specific and the spiritual needs of the four Indianapolis Deaneries and Archdiocese of Indianapolis generally, now hereby decree that:

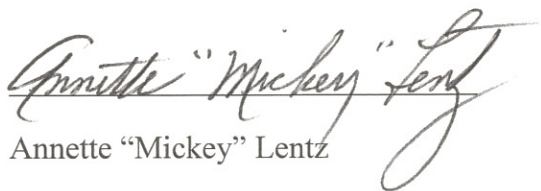
1. St. Bernadette Parish of Indianapolis, Indiana is to be merged into Our Lady of Lourdes Parish of Indianapolis, Indiana on November 30, 2014.
2. The public juridical person of St. Bernadette Parish is to be extinguished on the same date, or, if the matter should be appealed, upon the resolution of any such appeal.

3. Upon the extinction of the public juridical person of St. Bernadette Parish and the unification of its people into Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, the civil corporation of St. Bernadette Parish shall immediately transfer all assets and liabilities of the corporation, whether legal or equitable, to the civil corporation of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.
4. Upon the completion of the transfer of such assets and liabilities, the civil corporation of St. Bernadette Parish shall take such actions at civil law as are necessary to dissolve itself.
5. This decree is to be published to the pastor of St. Bernadette Parish and to the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.
6. The parishioners of St. Bernadette Parish and the parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish are to be given notice of this decree upon its receipt by the administrator of the parishes. Copies of this decree are to be made available for inspection at the offices of both parishes, and the parishioners shall be given notice as soon as is possible after its receipt by the pastors.
7. This decree is to be published in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Criterion*.
8. This decree is to be posted to the website of the Archdiocese.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Archdiocese on this 21st day of May, 2014.



Most Rev. Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Indianapolis



Annette "Mickey" Lentz

Chancellor

