



EARL BOYEA

EPISCOPUS LANSINGENSIS
DIVINA MISERATIONE ET APOSTOLICA SEDIS GRATIA

DECREE TO MERGE HOLY FAMILY PARISH IN OVID, WITH SAINT ISIDORE PARISH IN LAINGSBURG

The planting of the Catholic faith in the region of Ovid and Laingsburg originated with the devout families who settled in that area before and during the 1850s. In 1857, a Mass station in Ovid was established and cared for by the pastor of the former Annunciation Parish, Corunna. Likewise, from 1868, Catholics in the Laingsburg community benefited from the ministry of priests from Saint Mary's, Lansing. In 1899, both Laingsburg and Ovid were made stations of Saint Joseph, Saint Johns. Soon thereafter, in 1903, a church was raised in Laingsburg and placed under the patronage of Saint Isidore, patron saint of farmers. Saint Isidore, Laingsburg, was elevated to parochial status on December 12, 1909. A century after the creation of the first station at Ovid, the Catholic community in that place began to grow and consolidate, culminating in the establishment of Holy Family, Ovid, on July 1, 1967, as a mission of Saint Isidore. The Most Reverend James S. Sullivan, Auxiliary Bishop of Lansing, dedicated the sacred edifice of Holy Family, Ovid, on April 21, 1974. Holy Family was afterward elevated to parochial status in 1977. Meanwhile, due to the loss of the original parish church in a conflagration in 1966, the new church of Saint Isidore was dedicated by the Most Reverend Alexander Zaleski, second Bishop of Lansing, on March 12, 1968. Thus, from these foundations, many generations in Ovid, Laingsburg, and the surrounding communities have heard the Word of God proclaimed and preached, been nourished by the Most Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments, and gathered 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.

Nevertheless, the number of parishioners has gradually diminished. 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 eastern Clinton County and western Shiawassee County, this merger is most beneficial.

Holy Family Parish, Ovid, and Saint Isidore Parish, Laingsburg, have worked in close collaboration at various times throughout their history. These parishes have now taken important steps to align their liturgical and program schedules, as well as their common mission to meet the pastoral needs of all the faithful within their respective boundaries. After subsequent prayer and consultation, the merger of Holy Family Parish with Saint Isidore 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, the reasonable distance between the two churches (9

miles), the desire to avoid duplication of services, the spiritual welfare of both Catholic communities of eastern Clinton County and western Shiawassee County, 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, 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 region and the good of the diocese. Indeed, this action is motivated principally by concern for souls (*Christus Dominus*, no. 32) and is required for the good of the faithful (*Apostolorum Successores*, no. 214).

Thus, on November 24, 2019, the Parish Councils of Holy Family Parish and Saint Isidore Parish, after consultation with their pastor, the Reverend Father Robert Bacik, seeking this for the just cause of the unity of Catholic witness and for the good of the faithful, requested that the merger of Holy Family Parish with Saint Isidore Parish be made complete.

As the norm of universal law requires, I have consulted the Presbyteral Council on this matter (January 14, 2020). Its members were polled individually and unanimous support was given for the merger of Holy Family Parish to Saint Isidore Parish, that the newly constituted community will be called "Saint Isidore-Holy Family," and that Holy Family will be a secondary church ("oratory") of the newly constituted parish whose principal church shall be Saint Isidore, Laingsburg. This matter was likewise brought to the Diocesan Pastoral Council as part of its regular planning process on February 6, 2020, and the members also unanimously affirmed that Holy Family Parish, Ovid, shall be merged into Saint Isidore Parish, Laingsburg, and that the sacred edifice of Holy Family shall become a secondary church of the newly-constituted parish.

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 Holy Family Parish, Ovid, Michigan, be merged (*unio extinctiva*) with Saint Isidore Parish, Laingsburg, Michigan (cf. can. 121). The consolidated community, comprising Saint Isidore Parish and the church of Holy Family, Ovid, will be called Saint Isidore - Holy Family.

The Reverend Father Robert Bacik, pastor of the current Saint Isidore Parish and Holy Family Parish, 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 Holy Family Parish, which include all its assets and liabilities, is now transferred to Saint Isidore Parish (called "Saint Isidore - Holy Family") 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 Isidore shall be the principal place of worship of the consolidated parish. The sacred edifice of Holy Family, while retaining its title, will be the auxiliary place of worship for Saint Isidore - Holy Family. Any liturgical rites for the proper functioning of the parish may be celebrated at the secondary church to meet the pastoral needs of the faithful, as necessary according to the judgment of its pastor.

Before April 3, 2020, the parish registers of the former Holy Family 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 Laingsburg, 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 the church in Ovid and the adjoining complex are to be forwarded to the Diocesan Archives.

This decree shall take effect on April 3, 2020, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Prior to the effective date of this decree, I direct that it be given to the pastoral leadership of the present Holy Family Parish and the present Saint Isidore Parish, and that its contents, especially the dispositive part of this decree, be communicated to parishioners of both parishes on the weekend of Saturday, March 7, 2020, and Sunday, March 8, 2020. This may be effected by posting in a public space of each parish church or by printing in the bulletin of each parish. 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 3rd day of March, the commemoration of Saint Katharine Drexel, in the year of our Lord, 2020.



Mr. Michael Andrews
Chancellor



Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing