



February 19, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With this letter, I am attaching the decree that modifies the parish boundaries of the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, uniting the ceded territory with the newly merged Queen of Apostles Parish, which is a merger of Saint Dennis Parish in Madison and Saint Peter Parish in Madison.

This modification is being done to allow the newly merged parish to serve a connected area. The territory being joined to the new parish is not a very densely populated area as it contains the commercial area of East Towne Mall and environs, the educational area encompassing Madison Area Technical College, and the transportation area surrounding the Dane County Regional Airport. While the boundaries of the Cathedral parish are being modified, this change does not really impact the day-to-day operations or structure of the parish in any significant way. It does help to focus the area of pastoral engagement for the Cathedral parish, however. The reduced territory allows Saint Bernard's to be a shining light for the Schenk-Atwood neighborhood as well as the rest of the Diocese as it takes on its role as our Cathedral.

This change takes effect on the Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter the Apostle. This feast helps us to meditate on Saint Peter, who, inspired by faith, was able to state that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This statement of faith was confirmed as Saint Peter witnessed our Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection from the dead. He was then inspired by the Holy Spirit, poured out on him, our Blessed Mother, and the other Apostles at the great moment of Pentecost, to give witness to those saving realities, even to the point of becoming a martyr in Rome. This testimony to the true identity of Christ allowed Peter to take his place as the Prince of the Apostles and lead the Church. I look forward to the day when the new cathedra is installed in your church as a symbol and witness to that same faith and teaching office that Saint Peter and the other Apostles exercised. May the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux continue to be a witness of our Catholic faith in your neighborhood, in Madison, and in the Diocese.

Please know of my prayers for all of you, especially for Rev. Radowicz as your pastor in the great work of preparing the Cathedral for its dedication. May Saint Bernard inspire us to continually seek Jesus and follow Him more closely!

In Christ,

✠ Donald J. Hying
Bishop of Madison

Enclosure

O F F I C E O F T H E B I S H O P

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Donaldus Iosephus
Miseratione Divina et Apostolicae Sedis Gratia
Episcopus Madisonensis

DECREE ALTERING PAROCHIAL BOUNDARIES

Dividing the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and Uniting that Territory to Queen of Apostles Parish

Protocol No.: 024-2025

WHEREAS “the diocesan Bishop should be concerned to organize the arrangement of parishes in ways adapted to the care of souls, according to an inclusive and organic vision with wide pastoral outreach,” and “If the good of the faithful so requires, the Bishop should proceed, after consulting the diocesan presbyteral council, to alter territorial boundaries, to divide parishes that are too large, to merge small parishes, to establish new parishes or non-territorial centers for pastoral service in the community, or even to reorganize completely the arrangement of parishes within a particular city” (Directory *Apostolorum successores*, 214); and

WHEREAS “specific attention should be given to the following aspects, all of which form part of the model of parish life, thereby increasing pastoral effectiveness: Priestly collaboration...; Participation of the faithful (clerics, religious and laity)...; Parish associations...; [and] Centers of formation” (Ibid., 211); and

WHEREAS, however, the aforementioned aspects have suffered in the current general situation of the Diocese of Madison due to a shortage of clergy, difficulties in recruiting competent staff and volunteers to conduct necessary pastoral programming, and declining participation of the faithful in the sacramental and charitable activities of the Church for various reasons (e.g., increasing secularization, decreasing population in certain rural areas of the Diocese, the aftereffects of the Covid pandemic, etc.), prompting a comprehensive Diocesan strategic planning initiative undertaken in the spring of 2022, in consultation with a number of priests and competent lay faithful, to consider statistical data regarding demographics, Mass attendance, reception of the sacraments, numbers of youth in Catholic schools and faith formation programs, priest resources, and financial giving; and

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WHEREAS the results of the strategic study were collated and shared first with priests, deacons, religious, and key lay people from August through October 2022 and then with the entire Diocese online and in a special edition of the *Catholic Herald*, the Diocesan newspaper, dated 10 November 2022, containing information in both English and Spanish; and

WHEREAS the print and online publications of the study included a proposed map restructuring the parishes of the Diocese and invited all interested parties to offer feedback, suggested changes, or questions during a period spanning from November 2022 through December 2022; and

WHEREAS the initial proposal suggested merging Saint Bernard Parish with Saint Raphael Parish and Good Shepherd Parish, both located in Madison, the feedback obtained through the process of consultation led to the decision to keep Saint Bernard Parish as a separate parish since the proposed merger could make the newly formed parish too large in terms of geography and population as well as the desire to petition the Holy See to name the existing historical parish church of Saint Bernard as the new Cathedral of the Diocese of Madison after the Saint Raphael Cathedral Church was destroyed by fire on 14 March 2005 as a result of arson and was not rebuilt due to the prohibitive cost of such a project; and

WHEREAS the feedback from the consultation process also noted that the parochial boundaries of the proposed merger of Saint Dennis Parish and Saint Peter Parish, both located in Madison and both bordering Saint Bernard Parish, would not allow for the proposed parish to serve a contiguous area since the parish was divided in two parts by the parish territory belonging to Saint Bernard Parish; thus, discussions were begun to not only consider merging Saint Dennis and Saint Peter Parishes, but also to modify the existing boundaries of the proposed Cathedral so that the new parish formed from the merger of Saint Dennis and Saint Peter would cover a contiguous area, and the Cathedral would serve a more specialized portion of the downtown and near-east side of the City of Madison; and

WHEREAS in March of 2023 Saint Bernard Parish became “Pastorate 30” in the Diocesan strategic plan and the Reverend Michael Radowicz continued in his role of pastor for the new Cathedral parish; and

WHEREAS, in order to gather the necessary information and proofs concerning each proposed alteration of parish structures in the Into the Deep Strategic Plan in accord with canons 515 §2 and 50 *CIC*, the Reverend Tait Schroeder was mandated by the undersigned Bishop of Madison in a Decree dated 29 September 2023 (Prot. No. 127-2023) to collect and prepare information for the Presbyteral Council’s consultation; and

WHEREAS the findings from the Diocesan-wide discussions about the strategic plan were presented by the Reverend Tait Schroeder to the undersigned Bishop in consultation with the Presbyteral Council at a special session held on 14 December 2023; and

WHEREAS the Presbyteral Council, discussing the future of the Cathedral of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and the issues of the parish boundaries for both the Cathedral and Pastorate 23, recommended to the undersigned Bishop of Madison, in a unanimous consultative vote with two abstentions, that Saint Dennis and Saint Peter Parish (Madison) should be merged as proposed with a modification to the boundaries of the new parish and the Cathedral, such that the territory north of State Highway 30/Aberg Avenue belonging to the Cathedral, which consists primarily of commercial, educational, and transportation facilities (i.e., the East Towne Mall, Madison Area Technical College, and the Dane County Regional Airport), would become part of the newly merged parish uniting Saint Dennis and Saint Peter, thus making the territory contiguous and focusing the ministerial area of the Cathedral on the downtown and near-east side of Madison; and

WHEREAS, upon hearing the recommendation of Presbyteral Council, the undersigned Bishop of Madison thought it would be prudent to hear from the pastor and various parish representatives about the proposed modifications to Saint Bernard's parish boundaries and had the Reverend Tait Schroeder meet with the pastor and key leaders from Pastorate 30 on 9 January 2024 via video conference to hear their opinions about the advisability of altering the parochial territory; and

WHEREAS the pastor and the group were generally in favor of the modification of boundaries as proposed, although some members questioned whether it would be possible to modify the boundaries in other directions so that Saint Bernard would gain new parishioners; and

WHEREAS the results of this meeting were presented again to the Presbyteral Council at its regularly scheduled meeting on 5 March 2024, with the discussion generally being in favor of modifying the boundaries as proposed at the December 2023 meeting so that the need to further modify other boundaries would not unduly slow the process of merging the parishes of Saint Raphael and Good Shepherd as well as those of Saint Dennis and Saint Peter (Madison), and a consultative vote recommended to modify the boundaries as previously discussed at the December 2023 meeting with only one priest being opposed and one priest abstaining; and

CONSIDERING the following specific reasons providing the required just cause for modifying the parochial boundaries of the parish:

- 1) **Coordinating pastoral activity within a specific area.** As Saint Bernard Parish has been elevated to the rank of Cathedral by the Holy See to replace the former Saint Raphael Cathedral Church lost to fire, it will be important for the newly named Cathedral parish to focus its ministry not only on hosting Diocesan liturgies and events, but also working to evangelize the unique downtown neighborhood in which it is located. The reduction of the parish territory provides a specialized area in which the Cathedral can offer formation opportunities, cultural events, and outreach to the needy present in the neighborhood and downtown Madison. Since the territory being ceded to the new Queen of Apostles Parish does not include large population density since it contains mainly commercial, educational, and transportation centers, the focus of pastoral ministry and action can center on the urban area of the Schenk-Atwood neighborhood;

- 2) **Facilitating the overall strategic plan.** The modification of the parish boundaries allows for the overall strategic plan to be implemented in its individual parts. Most specifically, the modification allows for the neighboring Queen of Apostles Parish to be contiguous and allow for coordinated pastoral action in that territory. Additionally, not further modifying the eastern, southern, or western boundaries of the parish respects the feedback obtained concerning the other neighboring parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the neighboring pastorate of Stella Maris. While the parish boundaries are being modified, collaboration and coordination of pastoral outreach is necessary and encouraged between the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and its neighbors of Queen of Apostles, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Stella Maris;
- 3) **Creating a clear organizational structure in service of better evangelization.** Modifying the parochial boundaries of this parish will provide a clear organizational structure that will serve this urban area, ultimately fostering the good of souls by realigning resources for the sake of the essential mission of the Church to “go make disciples,” a central theme and desire of the undersigned’s episcopal ministry in the Diocese of Madison; and

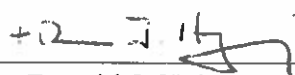
OBSERVING the precepts of canons 515 §2 and 50 *CIC*, the undersigned Bishop of Madison hereby

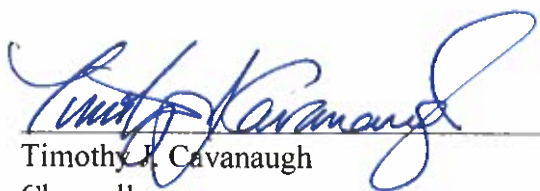
DECREES

- 1) That the territorial boundaries of the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux shall be as follows:
 - a. On the North: Starting at the intersection of Aberg Avenue and State Highway 113, then continuing southeast along Aberg Avenue until it ends and becomes State Highway 30, then continuing east along State Highway 30 to its intersection with Starkweather Creek;
 - b. On the East: Starting at the intersection of State Highway 30 and Starkweather Creek, then continuing southwest along Starkweather Creek until its confluence with Lake Monona;
 - c. On the South: Starting at Starkweather Creek’s confluence with Lake Monona, then continuing southwest along the Lake Monona shoreline to its intersection with the Yahara River, then continuing northwest along the Yahara River to its intersection with East Johnson Street;
 - d. On the West: Starting at the intersection of the Yahara River and East Johnson Street, then continuing northeast along East Johnson Street to its intersection with State Highway 113, then continuing northeast along State Highway 113 to its intersection with Aberg Avenue; and
- 2) That the remainder of the former territory of Saint Bernard Parish north and east of Aberg Avenue/State Highway 30 is divided from the parish and united to the new parish of Queen of Apostles as outlined in a separate decree creating the new parish issued on 19 February 2025 and effective on 22 February 2025; and

- 3) That, despite some of the parish territory outlined above for the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux in number one (1) being divided from the parish and being united to the new juridical person of Queen of Apostles Parish in accord with canon 122 *CIC*, the patrimonial goods and rights as well as the debts and other obligations will not be significantly altered for either the new Queen of Apostles Parish or the Cathedral Parish of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux by the modification of boundaries since the bulk of the ceded territory includes non-residential areas dedicated to commerce, education, and transportation, and there are no common ecclesiastical goods that are not divisible in the territory; thus, the undersigned Bishop of Madison determines that there need not be any exchange of common, divisible patrimonial goods between Queen of Apostles Parish and the Cathedral of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux; and
- 4) That the Chancellor is to ensure that this decree, along with other ecclesiastical documents, information, and minutes of the Presbyteral Council concerning this modification of parish boundaries, is carefully preserved in the Diocesan archive in accord with the norm of canons 486 and 491 §1 *CIC*, without prejudice to the norm of canon 535 §4 *CIC*; and
- 5) That this decree takes effect 22 February 2025, the liturgical Feast of the Chair of Peter; and
- 6) That the decree is to be notified on 22 February 2025 by its publication on the Vicar General's page of the Diocesan website and with reference made to the decree by an announcement at Masses held at Saint Bernard Parish, in the bulletin, or by other suitable means; and
- 7) That any eventual recourse against this decree can be taken in accord with the norms of canons 1734 *CIC* and following.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Madison on the 19th day of February in the Year of Our Lord 2025.


✠ Donald J. Hying
Bishop of Madison


Timothy J. Cavanaugh
Chancellor

SEAL