



DIOCESE OF LONDON

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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DECREE

Having received the recommendation of the Episcopal Vicar for the Deanery of London as well as the assessment of the present situation from the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in the hamlet of Delaware in the county of Middlesex in the province of Ontario (hereinafter referred to as *Sacred Heart Parish*), and having consulted with the Council of Priests of the Diocese of London on March 12, 2024, in accordance with canon 515, §2, I, Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B., Bishop of London, do hereby decree that the said Sacred Heart Parish be canonically suppressed effective May 31, 2024. I further decree that the territorial boundaries of Sacred Heart Parish be absorbed and amalgamated into those of All Saints Parish in the municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc in the county of Middlesex in the province of Ontario (hereinafter referred to as *All Saints Parish*) and Saint Charles Garnier Parish in the municipality of Glencoe in the county of Middlesex in the province of Ontario (hereinafter referred to as *Saint Charles Garnier Parish*).

The reasons for this action are:

- Sacred Heart Parish was established in July 1951. In recent years, parish statistics indicate a declining attendance at Sunday Masses, a marked decline in the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and marriage, and a notable drop in financial support of the parish by an ageing parish population.
- On February 21, 2018, Sacred Heart Church, the parochial church for Sacred Heart Parish, was seriously damaged by flood waters. After a consultation process involving the parishioners, the decision was taken to recommend to the Bishop of London that Sacred Heart Church be canonically closed as a place of divine worship. A canonical decree dated May 25, 2018 was issued ordering the closure of the church effective June 4, 2018. No appeal of this decision having been launched, the church building was subsequently demolished.

- Finding itself without a parochial church in which to assemble, the parishioners gathered for Mass at Hope Christian Community Reform Church in Mount Brydges, Ontario. However, these gatherings for the Eucharist ceased to be possible with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 as a result of which all assemblies were prohibited by the public health authorities.
- The parish community has not gathered since the beginning of the pandemic, even in the periods of limited access to worship. Consequently, the parishioners have dispersed, some to other parishes in the vicinity. For all intents and purposes, the parish now exists in name only.
- A gathering of the parishioners convened by the pastor in July 2021, when told of the financial realities of Sacred Heart Parish and the lack of any parochial life, unanimously supported the recommendation to suppress the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Committee have endorsed this recommendation.

In conformity to the norms set out in canon 121, I also decree that the patrimonial goods and rights of Sacred Heart Parish, along with its liabilities, will from the date of its suppression obtain and belong equally to All Saints Parish and Saint Charles Garnier Parish, with every care to be taken that in the arrangements for the goods and the discharge of obligations, the wishes of founders and benefactors and any acquired rights are fully safeguarded.

Furthermore, in order to provide easier access to the faithful, I decree that the sacramental records of Sacred Heart Parish be transferred to and maintained by All Saints Parish.

I direct that this decree be published in All Saints Parish, Saint Charles Garnier Parish and by a suitable means throughout the Diocese of London, with the understanding that any who wish to make recourse against it, in accordance with canon 1734, §1-2, must do so in writing within ten canonical days from the time this decree was lawfully notified.

Given at London in the province of Ontario this twenty-first day of May the year two thousand and twenty-four.

+ Ronald Dabbro CSB
Bishop of London

 Paul Scillargy
Chancellor