

Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Providence
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Providence, RI 02903
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DECREE IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Since 1914, St. Benedict Parish has served the Catholic faithful in the Conimicut section of Warwick. During that time, generations of families have heard the Word of God and received the sacraments of the Church in this parish. Within the past several years, preliminary efforts to unite the parishes of St. Benedict and neighboring St. Kevin have been successful. Since 2020, the Religious Education Programs have been merged, and in 2021, both parishes began to consolidate office staff, office location (now at St. Kevin), and a joint parish bulletin and parish website. Since 2017, the parishes have shared one parish priest.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, St. Benedict Parish was confronting a diminishing demographic shift in population with a resulting decline in sacramental practice. From 2011-19, there were 695 total Baptisms at St. Kevin and just 59 at St. Benedict. In that timeframe, St. Benedict had only 50 First Communions, 72 Confirmation candidates, and 17 weddings; while St. Kevin had 423 First Communions, 646 Confirmation candidates, and 247 weddings. From 2018 – 19, no students were enrolled in the St. Benedict Religious Education program, while St. Kevin Parish registered approximately 400. Currently, St. Benedict Parish has approximately 195 registered families, and St. Kevin has approximately 1,084. The most-recent scheduled Sunday Mass in the St. Benedict church building was offered on March 8, 2020 (just before the onset of the pandemic), and with the exception of an occasional Funeral Mass, all liturgical and social activities at St. Benedict Parish have ceased. There is a total lack of parish sacramental life and viability.

Given these factors, and motivated by a desire to strengthen the faith community in this neighborhood by a formal unity, it seems timely to move forward and build on the momentum generated thus far. Therefore, having received the request of the pastor and leadership of St. Benedict Parish and of St. Kevin Parish, both in Warwick; aware of their geographical proximity; having heard those affected by the proposal; and having consulted the diocesan

College of Consultors and the Council of Priests on October 13, 2021 in accord with Canon 515, §2, I hereby decree that:

1. St. Benedict Parish, Warwick (a territorial parish), shall be merged into St. Kevin Parish, Warwick (a territorial parish), in a *unio extinctiva*;
2. St. Kevin Parish will receive the membership of St. Benedict Parish and the territory of the latter parish, bounded:
 - Starting at the junction of Church Avenue and Bugbee Avenue, South along Bugbee Avenue to its end;
 - South by an airline from this point to Buckeye Brook;
 - Southeast along Buckeye Brook to West Shore Road;
 - Southeast by an airline from this point to the end of Hope Avenue;
 - South along and including both sides of Hope Avenue to Longmeadow Avenue;
 - Continuing South along Hope Avenue but including only the easterly side of Grove Avenue;
 - Southeast by an airline from this point to Narragansett Bay;
 - North along Narragansett Bay to Occupasstuxet Cove;
 - West along Occupasstuxet Cove to the extension of Moore Street;
 - South along but not including Moore Street and Lima Street to its end;
 - South by an airline from this point to the junction of Vernon Street and Leigh Street;
 - South by an airline from this point to the starting point.
3. All parish registers containing the records of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, and deaths of St. Benedict Parish will remain at the parish office of St. Kevin, where they will be faithfully maintained in accord with Canon 535;
4. All assets, debts, and liabilities of St. Benedict Parish shall become the assets, debts, and liabilities of St. Kevin Parish, in accord with Canon 121.

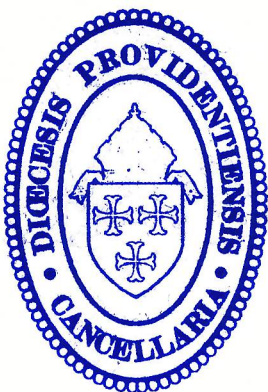
The effective date of this decree is November 17, 2021, at 11:59pm.

I direct that this decree be forwarded to Father Robert Marciano, the administrator of St. Benedict Parish and the pastor of St. Kevin Parish, who will provide copies to parishioners at all Masses at St. Kevin Parish on the weekend of October 23 - 24, 2021.

Parishioners who wish to make recourse against this decree have the right to do so. According to Church law (Canon 1734, §2), they must do so **within 10 (ten) business days** of receiving notification of this decree. Any recourse must be submitted in writing via postal mail to Bishop Tobin by November 5, 2021 and must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

At this time of transition, I extend my prayerful support to all the members of St. Benedict Parish, which has been a source of stability and strength for faithful families for over a century. Let us continue to rely upon God's goodness and providence as we begin a new chapter in our common journey of faith, especially amid these challenges.

Given in Providence,
at the Chancery,
this 18th of October 2021



Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Providence

(Rev.) Timothy D. Reilly
Chancellor