



**Diocese of Worcester**  
Office of the Bishop  
49 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

# DECREE

## In Nomine Domini. Amen.

Saint Mary Parish is a territorial parish serving the needs of the Catholic community in the town of Grafton, Massachusetts. Its parish church is located at 17 Waterville Street, Grafton. It was established as a parish in 1952.

The Pastor of the parish, in conjunction with the Parish Council and a specially convened group of parishioners, studied ways in which the parish could more effectively minister to the sacramental and spiritual needs of the parishioners of that area amidst a greatly dwindling parish census, scarce resources, and fewer clergy to staff the parish adequately.

In view of this study, the Pastor and his Parish Council have recommended to me that Saint Mary Parish, Grafton, be merged with Saint James Parish, Grafton, Massachusetts, and with Saint Philip Parish, Grafton, Massachusetts, its neighboring parish communities, to form a new parish community based at Saint Mary Parish. The Pastors of all three parishes are in agreement with this recommendation.

All the requirements of canons 50, 51, 127, 166 and 515 have been fulfilled.

In view of this recommendation, and after hearing the parties mandated by law, most especially the Presbyteral Council, in accord with canon 515, §2, of the *Code of Canon Law*, which met on March 21, 2022, and voted unanimously in favor of this recommendation I, the Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, holding before me my pastoral responsibilities to this particular church, hereby declare and decree the following:

- Saint Mary Parish, located in Grafton, Massachusetts, is hereby merged with Saint James Parish, Grafton, and Saint Philip Parish, Grafton, to form one new parish, in accord with canon 121; The name of the new parish will be Our Lady of Hope Parish located at the former Saint Mary Parish, that will retain the title of its church, in accord with canon 1218;
- In accord with canon 121, the territory and care of souls of the territorial membership of Saint Mary Parish, Grafton, Saint James Parish, Grafton, and

Saint Philip Parish, Grafton, are hereby transferred and entrusted to the newly created Our Lady of Hope Parish, located at 17 Waterville Street, Grafton;


- The newly created Our Lady of Hope Parish will assume the goods, assets, including property and patrimonial rights, as well as the burdens and liabilities of the former Saint Mary Parish, Saint James Parish and Saint Philip Parish, respecting the intentions of the founders and donors, concerning the allocation of goods and the fulfillment of obligations, in accord with canons 121 and 123;
- The sacramental records of the former Saint Mary Parish, Saint James Parish and Saint Philip Parish are hereby placed under the guardianship of the newly created Our Lady of Hope Parish;
- The newly created Our Lady of Hope Parish will enjoy public juridic personality by the law itself, in accord with canon 515, §3.

The effective date of this decree is July 1, 2022, at 12:01 a.m.

I order that this decree be published.

Given at Worcester, Massachusetts, in the halls of the Chancery, this the twenty-sixth day of May, in the year of our Lord, two thousand twenty-two

  
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Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, D.D., S.T.D.

  
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Mr. Raymond L. Delisle  
Chancellor

