

DAVID ALLEN ZUBIK



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF PITTSBURGH
DECREE

THE CREATION OF
SAINT BENEDICT THE MOOR PARISH
AS A PERSONAL PARISH

Whereas, Divine Mercy Parish was created by the extinctive union of the former Saint Benedict the Moor Parish, Epiphany Parish, and Saint Mary of Mercy Parish as a result of the *On Mission for the Church Alive!* planning process by a decree issued on December 10, 2019 and effective on January 6, 2020.

Whereas, since that time, it has become apparent that the particular needs of the parishioners of the former Saint Benedict the Moor Parish call forth special pastoral attention, different from those of the rest of Divine Mercy Parish.

Whereas, the fostering of the common good of the People of God must not only consider the needs of society as a whole, but must also justly and prudently consider the particular needs of individuals and minority groups.

Whereas, like all individuals and peoples, minority groups are indeed bound to consider and seek the common good of society as a whole; nonetheless, they have the duty and the right to maintain their own distinctive culture and to seek those things which are reasonably necessary for its preservation.

Whereas, the fostering and preservation of African-American Catholic Heritage, African Catholic Heritage, and Caribbean Catholic Heritage, which are of great value to the Church universal, is not only a matter relevant to those particular communities, but rather is a concern for the entire Body of Christ.

Whereas, on February 23, 2020, the diocesan bishop personally made a pastoral visit to Divine Mercy Parish in order to hear the concerns of the black Catholic community of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Whereas, a Task Force made up of parishioners of Divine Mercy Parish as well as one of the priests assigned to the parish was formed in order to investigate how the particular needs of the black Catholic faithful might be better served in the future, and this Task Force met four (4) times on April 30, May 4, 7, and 13, 2020.

Whereas the aforementioned Task Force has recommended that the needs of the black Catholic community would be better served by the creation of a separate, personal parish.

Whereas on June 16, 2020, a petition was presented to the diocesan bishop, signed by the priest who serves as the Team Moderator of the priests *in solidum* at Divine Mercy Parish, along with the signatures of the Parish Finance Council of the same parish, requesting that a personal parish be created to serve the needs of the those of the black Catholic community in the Diocese of Pittsburgh at large.

Therefore, having received the petition and having heard the Presbyteral Council on June 18, 2020 and the Vicars General on the same day, and with no harm coming to the good of souls and indeed for the spiritual benefit of the faithful, and all of the requirements of canons 50, 51, 127, 166, 515, and 518 having been fulfilled, we do hereby decree the following:

1. The establishment of a personal parish, that in particular celebrates black Catholic heritage in the United States, in accordance with the prescriptions of canon 515 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*.
2. This newly erected personal parish is given the title of Saint Benedict the Moor.
3. The faithful who participate in this personal parish shall be those members who reside within the Diocese of Pittsburgh and shall be by ascription. Others may become members, the proper ecclesiastical norms being observed. The voluntary offerings of the faithful and all other grants that will be made to Saint Benedict the Moor Parish shall constitute its revenue. The appointment of the pastor of the parish, and all future pastors shall be governed by the norms of the *Code of Canon Law*.
4. All buildings, real estate, moveable property, and sacred goods which were owned by the former Saint Benedict the Moor territorial Parish and are currently owned by Divine Mercy Parish shall be transferred to the newly erected Saint Benedict the Moor personal Parish. In accordance with the norm of canon 121, the intention of donors is to be respected.


5. The newly erected Saint Benedict the Moor personal Parish shall receive a portion of the other assets and liabilities of Divine Mercy Parish, that to the extent possible, correlates to those previously owned by the former Saint Benedict the Moor territorial Parish on December 31, 2019.
6. Furthermore, the voluntary offerings of the faithful and all other grants that will be made to the personal Parish of Saint Benedict the Moor shall constitute its revenue.

This decree becomes effective at 12:01 AM on July 13, 2020, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Finally, those who have the right may appeal this decree in accordance with the prescriptions of the law.

Given at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, this 19th day of June, in the Year of Our Lord 2020, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.


+ David A. Zubik
Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh


Very Reverend Thomas W. Kunz, VE
Vice Chancellor