



Office of the Bishop
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DECREE IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Since 1923, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish has served the Catholic faithful in the Nasonville section of Burrillville. During that time, generations of families have heard the Word of God and received the sacraments of the Church in this parish. The parish is also the site of the first shrine in the United States dedicated to St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. Within the past several years, preliminary efforts to unite the parishes of St. Theresa and neighboring Our Lady of Good Help have been successful. Since 2015, the Religious Education Program has been consolidated, as well as office staff and office location (at St. Theresa). The parish bulletin is also now shared, as well as a parish website and pastor.

In many ways, the situation for St. Theresa and Our Lady of Good Help parishes mirrors that of many parishes: a diminishing demographic shift in population with a resulting decline in sacramental practice. In 2018, there were 15 baptisms at St. Theresa and only 3 at Our Lady of Good Help; for both parishes in 2018, there were 15 First Communion students and 26 Confirmation candidates; there were no weddings at either parish in 2018. Currently, Our Lady of Good Help has 630 families, and St. Theresa has 425. The combined Religious Education enrollment totals 160 (Grades 1 – Confirmation), with less than 25 children from St. Theresa Parish. Of the four weekend Masses at both parishes, Our Lady of Good Help has a greater total attendance. The small town of Burrillville has four Catholic parishes in a town of only 16,000 total residents.

Given these factors, and motivated by a desire to strengthen both communities through 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. Theresa Parish and of Our Lady of Good Help Parish, both in Burrillville; 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 April 10, 2019 in accord with Canon 515, §2, I hereby decree that:

1. St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish, Nasonville (a territorial parish), shall be merged into Our Lady of Good Help Parish (a national parish), in a *unio extinctiva*;
2. Our Lady of Good Help Parish will receive the membership of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish and its territory. Our Lady of Good Help Parish will remain a national parish, and has no canonical parish territory of its own. However, Our Lady of Good Help Parish will assume responsibility for pastoral care of the territory of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish, bounded:
 - At the junction of the North Smithfield-Burrillville-Massachusetts state line, west along the state line to Douglas Pike.
 - South along and including both sides of Douglas Pike to Iron Mine Road.
 - South along the abandoned wood road to Joslin Road.
 - South by an airline to the junction of Sand Hill Road and Victory Highway, four-tenths of a mile west of Douglas Pike.
 - North by an airline from this point to the junction of Tarkiln Road and Barnes Road.
 - East along and including both sides of Tarkiln Road to Colwell Road.
 - South along and including both sides of Colwell Road to the town line.
 - East along the Gloucester and Smithfield town lines to Douglas Pike.
 - Along and including both sides of Douglas Pike to the North Smithfield-Burrillville town line.
 - North along the town line to the starting point.
3. The St. Theresa church building, Nasonville, will remain open for liturgical use and will serve as a mission of Our Lady of Good Help Parish, Mapleville;
4. All parish registers containing the records of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, and deaths of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish be transferred to

the parish office of Our Lady of Good Help, where they will be faithfully maintained in accord with Canon 535;

5. All assets, debts, and liabilities of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish shall become the assets, debts, and liabilities of Our Lady of Good Help Parish, in accord with Canon 121.


The effective date of this decree is July 1, 2019, at 12:01am.

I direct that this decree be forwarded to the pastor of St. Theresa and Our Lady of Good Help parishes, who will provide copies to parishioners at both places at weekend Masses on May 11- 12, 2019.


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 May 24, 2019 and must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

At this time of transition, I extend my prayerful support to all the members of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish, which has been a source of stability and strength for faithful families for nearly 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 as we strive to encounter the Risen Lord during this Easter Season.

Given in Providence,
at the Chancery,
this 1st of May, 2019



Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Providence



(Rev.) Timothy D. Reilly
Chancellor