



*Diocese of Fall River*  
*Office of the Bishop*  
*Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.*

**Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.**  
**by the Grace of God and of the Apostolic See,**  
**Bishop of Fall River**

**DECREE**

**Whereas**, a decree issued on the first day of June in the Year of Our Lord two thousand twelve announced the suppression of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Parish in Fall River, the suppression of Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish in Fall River, and the erection of Saint Bernadette Parish in Fall River, to take effect on the twenty-third day of June in the Year of Our Lord two thousand twelve; and

**Whereas**, the building of Notre Dame de Lourdes Church was recommended as the worship site of the newly formed parish by the Parish Planning Task Force and confirmed by my predecessor in the above decree, because of its newer construction, handicap accessibility, and large space for parish functions; and

**Whereas**, Saint Bernadette Parish does not have the resources to repair or maintain two separate church buildings; and

**Whereas**, at the time of the merger, the Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception was closed for divine worship; and

**Whereas**, I sought and obtained the consent of the Reverend Roger Landry, the current Pastor of Saint Bernadette Parish, for this proposed action, after he consulted the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the members of the Parish Finance Council; and

**Whereas**, on November 17, 2014, the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Fall River was consulted on the proposed canonical action herein being considered, and after discussion, received their unanimous support; and

**Whereas**, I have determined that no other parties can legitimately claim rights for themselves regarding Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church or the property on which it stands; and

**Whereas**, the following grave causes suggest that Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church be relegated to profane but not sordid use and can no longer be used for divine worship:

- (1) Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church is in need of extensive and urgent repairs.
- (2) Saint Bernadette Parish, in which Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church is located, does not have the resources to repair and maintain this aging church building.

- (3) There is no other source of funding, including diocesan resources, for the necessary repairs, preservations and the maintenance of the church. The financial burden of repairing and maintaining Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church would cause important diocesan pastoral programs to suffer due to lack of funding and negatively impact the pastoral work of the Diocese.
- (4) The church building does not have any particular historical significance.
- (5) Notre Dame de Lourdes Church is sufficient to adequately serve the foreseeable needs for divine worship within Saint Bernadette Parish.

**Therefore**, in virtue of the provisions of Canons 1212 and 1222, §2 of the Code of Canon Law; having judged that sufficient grave causes are present and that the good of souls will not thereby be impaired; and having made the necessary consultations, I hereby DECREE that Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church, located at 15 Thomas Street, in Fall River, Bristol County, Massachusetts, is hereby relegated to profane but not sordid use.

**Further**, I hereby decree that any sacred furnishings and artifacts, which Saint Bernadette Parish does not retain for its own use, be disposed of in a manner befitting their character and the known intentions of any donor.

**Further**, in addition to the usual requirements of Church law (Canons 1290-1298) for the valid and licit alienation or permanent modification by Saint Bernadette Parish of the real estate formerly belonging to the Parish of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception in Fall River or any part thereof, any such alienation or modification is subject to my approval as being consonant with the requirements of Canon 1222, §2.

**This decree** takes effect at 12:01 AM on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, and is to be communicated to the members of Saint Bernadette Parish and to the faithful of the Diocese in an appropriate manner.

**In the event** that anyone with canonical standing feels injured by the provisions of this Decree, he or she may initiate a hierarchical recourse against this Decree according to the provisions of Canon 1732-1739 within ten useful days.

**Given** at the Curia of the Diocese of Fall River on this twenty-second day of December in the Year of Our Lord two thousand and fourteen.



Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.  
Bishop of Fall River

Attest:



Chancellor