

WILLIAM PATRICK

By the Grace of God and



the Favor of the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

## DECREE

In the mid-1800's, when settlers began arriving, commerce was developing and the railroad was being established, the area to become Bangor was forming. The Catholic population of the area, being served as a mission from neighboring St. Peter and St. Joseph Parishes, also began to grow. It was in 1898, when seven families of the area joined together to build St. Mary Church, becoming the first Catholic church in Bangor. Later, in 1928, the parish bought the Concordia Hall, a much larger building able to hold the growing congregation. Several alterations to the building were made and it served the people of Bangor for many years. West Salem, historically of protestant roots, didn't have a Catholic church until St. Leo the Great Parish was established in 1957. Catholics living in West Salem would be members of St. Mary Parish in Bangor and other surrounding parishes. Both parishes served the Catholic population of the area; West Salem *having a larger community today*. As early as 1989, St. Mary and St. Leo the Great Parishes would share a pastor while each maintaining their individual identities. Most recently the pastoral care of these two parishes has been entrusted to Father Raja Kennedy Arul-Samy. In the spring of 2020, major structural failure was discovered at St. Mary church rendering it unusable and the cost to repair excessive; the church was deconsecrated on October 26, 2020. After much consideration, prayer and with the consultation of the two parishes, it was determined the best way to proceed was to merge the two parish families together and use St. Leo the Great church as the building for the newly established parish.

Having given careful consideration to the pastoral needs of Christ's faithful in West Salem and Bangor, I consented to the request made by Father Kennedy to begin the process of unification. This process has carefully followed the pastoral planning protocols for the merger of parishes. Accordingly, a Transition Committee was formed in the parishes to advance the process. After consulting the Presbyteral Council on 18 February 2021, in accord with canon 515, §2, of the *Code of Canon Law*; the Diocesan Personnel Council, and the Diocesan Finance Council on 1-November 2020, according to the protocols of our diocesan pastoral plan—I erected a quasi-parish under the title of St. Teresa of Kolkata (can. 516, §1) so that the process of merging the current parishes into a single canonical entity could be expedited. Since this process has now come to its conclusion, I, the undersigned Bishop of La Crosse, exercising my ordinary power and in virtue of canon 515, §2, do hereby decree that the parishes of St. Leo the Great, West Salem and St. Mary, Bangor, be and is hereto united, joined, and merged together. I do herewith decree that from this extinctive-union and merger of St. Leo the Great Parish and St. Mary Parish, the Parish of St. Teresa of Kolkata, which shall be located in West Salem, is hereto

erected, established, and created with all the rights, obligations, and privileges accorded it by law.

The Parish of St. Teresa of Kolkata shall comprise the territories of the former Parishes of St. Leo the Great and St. Mary. This parish is a part of the La Crosse Deanery.

The intentions of the founders and donors regarding the temporal good and patrimonial rights proper to the extinct Parish of St. Leo the Great and extinct Parish of St. Mary must be respected. In addition, the temporal goods, patrimonial rights, and obligations of each of the extinct parishes must be also defined and allocated in accordance with the norm of law. (cc. 121 and 122).

All the parish and sacramental records of the extinct parishes of St. Leo the Great and St. Mary are to be properly preserved and safeguarded in St. Teresa of Kolkata Parish, West Salem, in accordance with the norm of law.

This decree is to be effective on July 1, 2021.

This decree is to be communicated to the pastor, who is the canonical representative of the two parishes affected by this extinctive-union and merger and to all interested persons, according to the norm of law. (c. 532).

Given at La Crosse on the twenty-ninth day of June in the year of Our Lord 2021, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul.



SEAL

Very Rev William A. Rhein

Chancellor

William Patrick Bertram  
Bishop of La Crosse