



Robert

by the grace of God and the favour of the Apostolic See

Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

Prot. No.: P1/2022

DECREE OF AMALGAMATION OF PARISHES (cf. can. 515 §2 CIC)

1. Whereas the parishes of Our Lady and St. Columba, Our Lady and St. Bernadette and Our Lady and St. Aidan are three territorial parishes comprising different parts of the town of Wallsend in North Tyneside;
2. Whereas the Reverend David Smith has been appointed to the office of parish priest of all three neighbouring parishes (cf. can. 526 §1 CIC);
3. Whereas the three parishes experienced a considerable decline in the number of practising parishioners following the recent global pandemic and, while this has increased since and the parishes have become more vibrant, there has been an ongoing growth in collaboration between them in order to respond to the needs of the communities;
4. Whereas that collaboration has now developed to the extent where there is *de facto* one parish community with three churches;
5. Whereas, given the reduced number of priests available for pastoral ministry within the Diocese, as diocesan Bishop I have a duty to ensure that the most effective provision can be made for the pastoral care of the faithful of every parish;
6. Whereas the parish priest has carried out extensive consultations within the three parishes concerning their possible amalgamation, and has received support for the proposal in all three with no objections having been registered, and I have addressed the three communities on the question with the same result (cf. can. 50 CIC);
7. Whereas, at its meeting on 10 November 2022, I consulted the Council of Priests on the possibility of an extinctive union of between the parishes of Our Lady and St. Columba, Our Lady and St. Bernadette and Our Lady and St. Aidan in Wallsend (cf. can. 127 §§1-2 CIC), and received a unanimous favourable recommendation;
8. Whereas I am satisfied that the amalgamation of the three said parishes is necessary for the good of souls (cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Pastoral Mission of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, 32; Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, *Apostolorum Successores*, 215);