

# Walker

By the Grace of God and the Favor of the Apostolic See

## Bishop of Sioux City

The Parish of Saint Mary Church in Ashton, in Osceola County, Iowa, dates from 1880 and is the locus of that Catholic Community's existence.

In 2015 the Diocese of Sioux City, with the assistance of professional consultants, embarked upon Ministry 2025: a comprehensive visioning and planning process aimed at providing opportunities to enhance the pastoral care of the faithful, address shortages in clergy, and evaluate current parish structures in light of changing demographic trends. Ministry 2025 has employed extensive collaboration among clergy and lay leaders throughout the Diocese.

The insights drawn from multiple deanery level meetings, the recommendations of pastoral planning experts, and sacramental, demographic and other relevant data was presented to a working committee on November 7, 2016, which subsequently recommended a new grouping consisting of Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley, Saint Mary Parish, Ashton, and Saint Patrick Parish, Sheldon with the merging of Saint Mary Parish, Ashton and Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley.

The proposal was released publicly on Jan. 12, 2017 in the Catholic Globe Newspaper and members of Saint Mary Parish, Ashton and Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley were asked to make known their needs and desires about the proposed merger. The Presbyteral Council received reports and offered opinions and guidance throughout the pastoral planning process.

On June 9, 2017, the Presbyteral Council provided consultation, in accord with canon 515 §§2,3 concerning the proposal that Saint Mary Parish, Ashton be merged (*unio extinctiva*) into Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley. Upon full discussion, at which time due consideration was given to reasons for and against the proposed merger, and with opportunity to suggest alternate courses of action, members of the Presbyteral Council expressed agreement in favor of the proposed merger.

The following just causes suggest that Saint Mary Parish, Ashton be merged into Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley:

- 1) The declining number of faithful attending Mass and the limited quantity of additional sacramental experiences;
- 2) The enhancement of collaborative ministry and to ensure the best utilization of priest personnel;
- 3) The recent and projected shifts in populations, moving from rural to urban settings;

- 4) A consolidation of human resources directed toward strengthening the quality of the liturgy and encouraging fuller active participation;
- 5) To better effect the preaching and spread of the Gospel.

Accordingly, in virtue of the prescription of canon 121 and 515, §2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, having judged that just causes are present, that the intentions of donors and any other acquired rights have been examined and given due consideration, and that the good of souls will not thereby be impaired,

I HEREBY DECREE AN EXTINCTIVE UNION BY WHICH  
SAINT MARY PARISH OF ASHTON, IOWA  
BE MERGED INTO  
SAINT ANDREW PARISH, SIBLEY, IOWA

Upon the completion of the transfer of such assets and liabilities, the civil corporation of Saint Mary Parish, Ashton shall take such actions at civil law as are necessary to dissolve itself. Furthermore, any other patrimony, including sacramental records, death, and items or documents of historical or spiritual significance shall be transferred to Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley.

The church building of Saint Mary, Ashton is to move into Worship Site Status.

This decree becomes effective June 30, 2017. A copy of this decree is to be sent to the pastor of Saint Andrew Parish, Sibley and its contents are to be communicated at all of the Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, June 17, 2017 and Sunday, June 18, 2017. Furthermore, this decree is to be published in the Diocesan Newspaper, *The Catholic Globe* and on the diocesan website. Any legitimate party, considering himself aggrieved by this decree, retains the right to request emendation or revocation within (10) useful days (c. 1734 §§1,2).

Given in the Diocese of Sioux City on this tenth day of June in the year of Our Lord 2017.

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Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless  
Bishop of Sioux City

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Deacon David Lopez, Ph.D.  
Chancellor