



DAVID J. WALKOWIAK

**Decree of Merger of Sacred Heart Parish in Muskegon Heights,
into Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish in Muskegon, Michigan**

Whereas Sacred Heart Parish in Muskegon Heights, Michigan, is comprised of the Catholic faithful who live in that community, and

Whereas demographic changes reflecting a dramatic decline in the general population and among the Catholic faithful residing in Muskegon Heights, including but not limited to a decline in registered parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish, a decline in the parish's Mass attendance, a decline in parish offertory revenue, and the number of neighboring parishes in proximity, have severely impacted the viability of Sacred Heart Parish, and

Whereas the Sacred Heart Parish Finance Council determining the parish's inability to operate without a significant financial loss, following consultation with parishioners, recommended the closing of the parish, and


Whereas the enactment of that recommendation, resulting in the merger of Sacred Heart Parish into the neighboring parish of Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish in Muskegon, would provide for a more financially stable and pastorally fruitful ministry to the faithful of Muskegon Heights, and


Whereas, having heard the Presbyteral Council in accordance with Canon 515.2 at its scheduled meeting on January 24, 2024,

Therefore, I, David J. Walkowiak, Bishop of Grand Rapids, hereby decree the following:

1. The Parish of Sacred Heart, Muskegon Heights, Michigan be merged effective February 19, 2024 into St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Muskegon, Michigan (cf. can. 121).
2. The territory, parishioners, parish records, property, assets, and liabilities of Sacred Heart Parish will be joined to those of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Muskegon. In accord with civil and canon law, donor restrictions will be honored.
3. The care of Sacred Heart Church, School, and Rectory and related facilities, whether sacred or profane, will become the responsibility of St. Thomas Parish.
4. Recourse against this decree must be submitted to me in writing within ten days in accord with the procedures set forth in canons 1732-1739.
5. This decree shall be promulgated by publication on the Diocese of Grand Rapids website, in the parish bulletin, and other means of communication as deemed appropriate by the Pastor.

Given at the Chancery Office in Grand Rapids, Michigan on the 13th day of February in the Year of Our Lord 2024.


Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids


Ecclesiastical Notary