

Diocese of Beaumont

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DECREE

The "good of souls" is my primary motive behind this decree; that is, the spiritual and pastoral benefit of the people and a parish that is a more vibrant and alive Catholic community of faith, hope, and love.

This decree is based upon numerous factors, but the most significant are listed below.

1. Since 2011, both St. Peter the Apostle Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish, Groves, have been under the pastoral care of a single Pastor, due to the shortage of priests in this Diocese. Msgr. Kenneth Greig agreed to come out of retirement in order to pastor the two parishes from 2011-2014. Fr. J.C. Coon has been the Pastor from July 1, 2014 to the present.
2. Over the past six years, many of the parish programs and ministries of St. Peter the Apostle Parish have gradually been combined into the programs and ministries at Immaculate Conception Parish. Recently, the Parish Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils have also been combined.
3. Parishioners of St. Peter the Apostle Parish, as well as the Parish Councils, have been inquiring about merging with Immaculate Conception Parish for several years, particularly since September, 2017. The initiative for the discernment process came from the Councils of both parishes, with the support of the Pastor. The Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils of both parishes have met together at least two times and are in agreement with the proposal to merge. The parishioners of St. Peter the Apostle Parish gathered for a town-hall meeting, during which the topic of a merger was discussed. There was a combined town-hall meeting for the parishioners of both parishes regarding the proposed merger, resulting in general consensus that the Pastor recommend to the Bishop that St. Peter the Apostle Parish merge with Immaculate Conception Parish. A written, formal recommendation was sent to Bishop Curtis Guillory by Fr. J.C. Coon, Pastor, on December 21, 2017.
4. The average weekend attendance at St. Peter the Apostle Parish is 350 individuals. Since the historic flooding from Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey at the end of August, 2017, many of these individuals have been attending Immaculate Conception Parish, where they have been welcomed.
5. The population of the city of Groves has diminished over the years to an estimated 15,758 in 2018, and the demographics of the city are changing, especially after "Harvey". Many parishioners of St. Peter the Apostle Parish had significant flooding to their homes and businesses. To continue to maintain two parishes in Groves with decreasing membership would require an unnecessary duplication in pastoral services and programs, human resources, financial resources, and maintenance of aging buildings.
6. Since 2005, St. Peter the Apostle Parish has sustained \$1,733,000 in damages from 3 Hurricanes, with the parish paying \$70,474. After Hurricane Rita in 2005, the insurance deductible was raised to 3% of the appraised value of each building. The damages from the flooding of "Harvey" at St. Peter the Apostle Parish amount to \$105,000: Church-\$60,000, Parish Hall-\$40,000, Rectory-\$5,000. The damages are at the deductible threshold. Thus, the parish has to pay for the repairs of the buildings. The same 3% deductible will apply for future Hurricanes/Storms.

Given the above, and after the required canonical consultation with the Presbyteral Council on January 24, 2018, I have determined that merging St. Peter the Apostle Parish into Immaculate Conception Parish is the prudent decision to make for the good of the faithful. The merger will promote a stronger and more viable Catholic parish community.

Therefore, I DECREE that St. Peter the Apostle Parish will be merged into Immaculate Conception Parish, effective March 1, 2018. The merged parish will be named IMMACULATE CONCEPTION–ST. PETER THE APOSTLE PARISH. Fr. J.C. Coon will continue as Pastor.

In accord with Canons 121-123 of the Code of Canon Law of the Latin Rite Catholic Church, all of the assets, liabilities, temporal goods, and property of the original St. Peter the Apostle Parish will be transferred to the new Immaculate Conception–St. Peter the Apostle Parish. In the use of goods and in the fulfillment of obligations transferred to the new parish, the intentions of founders and donors must be faithfully fulfilled.

In addition, the previous boundaries of each original parish will be combined and become the territorial boundaries of Immaculate Conception–St. Peter the Apostle Parish. These boundaries are defined by a directional explanation, as well as a map, which are attached.

My decree is issued this date and will be promulgated by insertion in the weekend bulletin of Immaculate Conception Parish, by publication in the diocesan newspaper--the *East Texas Catholic*, and by placement on the diocesan website.

Given on the 8th day of February, 2018, at the Curia of the Diocese of Beaumont.



Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.
Bishop of Beaumont



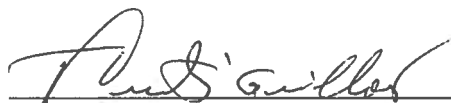
Sister Esther Dunegan, IWBIS
Chancellor/Notary

**Boundaries for
Immaculate Conception-St. Peter the Apostle Parish
Groves, Texas**

Effective March 1, 2018

Beginning at the Sabine Neches Canal and the Lakeview City limit (Main Street);
then North on Main Street in a line continuous to Gulfway Drive (Highway 87);
then West on Gulfway Drive to Highway 347;
then North on Highway 347 to Highway 136;
then Northeast on Highway 136 to Highway 366;
then East and Southeast on Highway 366 to Orchard Avenue;
then Northeast on Orchard Avenue and its continuance to the Neches River;
then Southeast along the Neches River, curving Southwest along the Sabine
Neches Canal to the point of origin (Main Street)

Approved:



Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.
Bishop of Beaumont

Date: February 8, 2018



GROVES

Immaculate Conception-
St. Peter the Apostle
Parish
Merged: March 1, 2018

ATLANTIC REFINING COMPANY

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