



RT REV SÉAMUS CUNNINGHAM  
BISHOP OF HEXHAM & NEWCASTLE

## DECREE

### **Of Amalgamation of the parishes of St Mary's, Easington Lane and St Michael's, Houghton-le-Spring.**

WHEREAS, the intention of the will of the donors, any restrictions on assets, including land, as well as any acquired rights, have been examined and taken into consideration. The Presbyteral Council was consulted on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018, in accord with canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law in relation to the modification of parishes and posed no objection;

WHEREAS, the decline of Mass goers attending the church of St Mary's, Easington has resulted in a considerable gap between declining income and increasing expenditure which has called into the question the future viability of St Mary's parish;

WHEREAS, after a review process, the partnership of parishes in the Benedict partnership have recommended that the parishes of St Mary, Easington Lane and St Michael's, Houghton-le-Spring should merge due to their reasonable proximity and as an enhancement of collaborative ministry with the pastoral planning efforts of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle;

WHEREAS, having judged that sufficient just causes are present and that the good of souls will not thereby be impaired, and that it is advantageous for the future existence of both communities to merge one into the other,

I HEREBY DECREE an extinctive union, following the canons 121 & 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, by which the parish of St Mary's, Easington Lane is amalgamated with and subsumed into the parish of St Michael's, Houghton-le-Spring; the separate juridic (legal) personality of St Mary's, Easington Lane will cease to exist, and it will no longer be a subject of obligations and rights under canon law. The new parish shall be named St Michael's with one church building, St Michael's Church, Houghton-le-Spring.

The administration of the church buildings and premises will be based at St Michael's Church, Houghton-le-Spring. The assets and liabilities of the former St Mary's Parish will become the assets and liabilities of St Michael's parish, Houghton-le-Spring. The sacramental registers along with any other parish records and historical documents, shall be preserved at the premises of St Michael's Church, Houghton-le-Spring. The territorial boundaries of the parish of St Michael's, Houghton-le-Spring will henceforth be the combined boundaries of the former St Mary's, Easington Lane and St Michael's, Houghton-le-Spring.

This decree becomes effective from midnight on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018, prior to which the substance of it is to be communicated to parishioners at the aforementioned parishes, including the display in an appropriate place so that the parishioners can read it as they enter or exit the church. It will also be available on the website, [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk). Canonical recourse may be made within the peremptory time limit of ten (10) business days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law (CIC canon 1734 §2).

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Bishop's House in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of September in the Year of Our Lord 2018.



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✠Rt Rev Seamus Cunningham  
Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle



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Rev Fr Simon Lerche  
Diocesan Chancellor