

THE VERY REVEREND MATTHEW CRANE
VICAR FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS

GENERAL EXECUTORY DECREE
Nominando creaturas

Naming the creations around us is an activity called forth from our very nature by our own Creator (Genesis 2:19). So, though it is for the Diocesan Bishop to establish, suppress, or significantly alter parishes (c. 515 §2), it is fitting that he consult with the rest of the Children of God to elect names for parishes, especially newly established ones.

To that end, **I hereby establish the following norms for the naming of parishes in the Diocese of Saint Cloud:**

Art. 1 General norm

To preserve the autonomy and authority established by c. 515 §2, the Diocesan Bishop is always free to abrogate or derogate from the following norms and procedure, insofar as he does not depart from universal law.

Art. 2 Acceptable names for parishes

§1 A parish name is not arbitrary. Rather, it is to be motivated by real facts arising from the parishioners and the region in which they reside.

§2 While a parish is often named for the title of the primary parochial church – eg, the Church of Saint Wilgefortis is the primary parochial church of the Parish of Saint Wilgefortis – it need not be so. In fact, for pastoral reasons, a parish may bear a name different from the title of any church in its territory.¹ In any case, even after two or more parishes merge to form one new parish, the names of the parochial churches may not be changed without a special permission from Rome (c. 1218), and diocesan leadership does not intend to seek this permission or change the name of any church.

§3 Because of long-standing custom in the Diocese of Saint Cloud and the religious character of parishes, even when parishes do not bear the title of a church in their territory, they should nevertheless be named after a sacred person or mystery. Therefore, a parish may only be named after the Most Holy Trinity; Our Lord Jesus Christ, invoked under a mystery of his life or under his name as already used in the Divine Liturgy; the Holy Spirit; the Blessed Virgin Mary under a

¹ CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Notification concerning the title of a church *Omnis Ecclesia*, 10 February 1999, in *Notitiae*, 35 (1999), pp. 158-159, English translation in *Roman Replies and CLSA Advisory Opinions*, 1999, pp. 20-21.

given title already found in the Divine Liturgy; the holy Angels, or a Blessed or a Saint inscribed in the Roman Martyrology.²

Art. 3 Recommended Procedure

§1 The numbers of this article are not binding in the usual sense but constitute merely recommendations to be adapted for persons and circumstances. If they prove insufficient for parochial leadership, a petition to Vicar for Canonical Affairs for more binding norms may be proposed.

1° Considering what is established by Article 2 § 1 of this instruction – namely, that an acceptable name is one which arises from the parishioners and the region in which they reside – it is strongly encouraged that some effort be made to receive, at least initially, general input from all future parishioners of the proposed merged parish.

2° Considering the need to avoid merely dilatory or unnecessarily elaborate procedures, it is recommended that the general comments and suggestions of parishioners, mentioned in the preceding number, be refined by a much smaller group that includes both clergy and laity. For example, the pastor or pastors of the parishes involved in the proposed merger might associate with themselves three or more lay consultants who somehow represent the different communities which will make up the to-be-named parish.

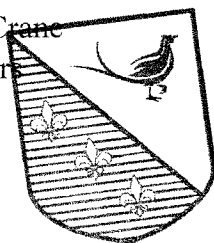
3° Ultimately, the Diocesan Bishop's work is best facilitated by being presented with a *terna* – a list of three potential names – from which he may prayerfully select one to be the name of the newly merged parish.

This decree is promulgated by being posted on the All Things New website of the Diocese of Saint Cloud; it is effective the Memorial of St. Raymond of Penyafort, January 7, 2025.

Given at the Chancery, the 31st Day of December, the Year of Our Lord 2025

Matthew C. Crane

The Very Rev. Matthew Crane
Vicar for Canonical Affairs



Joseph C. Tounalis

Ecclesiastical Notary

² Pontificale Romanum, *Ordo dedicationis eccelsiae et altaris*, editio typica 1977, cap. II: Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae, n. 4.