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Prot. N. 2019 RPU-2

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Over the past several decades, many things have changed in this particular church. Changing demographics have affected the size and wealth of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the vitality of her parishes. This is particularly true in the City of Chicago itself, where the total population has decreased by more than 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,736,000 today. In the South Suburban municipalities of Riverdale and South Holland, the locus of the parish effected by this decree, the existing population of approximately 34,000 has been relatively stable over the last 25 years, decreasing by only 10% in the last two decades. Still, demographic change has transformed these communities, and in recent years the existing residents constitute a predominately non-Catholic population.

Many of our parishes have received generous financial subsidies from the people of the archdiocese. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2018 these subsidies amounted to \$144,373,461.00, including \$38,171,840.00 to 106 parishes, and \$106,201,621.00 to 83 Catholic schools. More than \$25,000,000.00 was given in the last two of these years. Little of this money will be recovered. In August 2018 the combined debt of the three parishes forming the locus of this decree was \$5,600,000.00. The generous and shrinking population of the Archdiocese of Chicago cannot continue this level of financial support for parishes and Catholic schools. Our hope is that our parishes will become more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. To achieve this hope, the parishes must be financially prudent and able to support themselves when possible.

Following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, my decree of March 18, 2019, extinguished the separate juridic persons of three parishes within the 11 square miles of the adjacent villages of Riverdale and South Holland in South Suburban Cook County: St. Jude the Apostle Parish (established in 1957); Holy Ghost Parish (established in 1962); and St. Mary, Queen of Apostles Parish (established in 2011 from the union of the former St. Mary of the Assumption Parish and the former Queen of Apostles Parish). These parishes were united to form one new parish named, *ad interim*, Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish, a parish with three churches, the parish church now located on the campus of the former St. Jude the Apostle Parish

The Catholic population of the new parish has decreased dramatically since 1990. This may be deduced from the continuous decline in Mass attendance, a decline of 74% to 75% in each of the three churches since 1998: 1,278 to 337 at St. Jude the Apostle Church; 1,164 to 301 at Holy Ghost Church; and 627 to 155 at Queen of Apostles Church.

In holding the assets and liabilities of the three united parishes, the new Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish has been unduly burdened with buildings and costs it does not need and cannot reasonably use or afford. Notable is the ordinary maintenance and other expenses associated with the ownership and use of Queen of Apostles Church of the former St. Mary, Queen of Apostles Parish. Until now Queen of Apostles Church has remained open for public worship. However, recent Mass attendance at the church has continued to decline and the offerings obtained from worshippers there has been less than \$120,000.00 in the last year, resulting in the continued inability of the church and the new parish to pay the bills for ordinary maintenance and operations. An estimated annual savings of \$80,000.00 will accrue to the benefit of the new parish if Queen of Apostles Church were closed.

Since the extinctive union of March 18, 2019, Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish has also had the parish church of St. Jude the Apostle and Holy Ghost Church. St. Jude the Apostle Church has a seating capacity of 760, more than enough for the worship needs of the entire parish. This church is situated near the geographic center of the new parish, less than two miles from Queen of Apostles Church. It is in relatively good repair and has had a regular Sunday assembly more than twice that of Queen of Apostles Church, and operating income nearly three times larger.

Apart from maintenance and operating expenses, declining attendance, and shrinking income at Queen of Apostles Church, it must be noted that the church campus has no full-time resident priest or other full-time personnel on site. Apart from Sunday Mass, the parish has been unable to support other parish functions on the church campus. Consequently, the church and other campus buildings are neither regularly used nor staffed. For most of the week the church campus has become an almost abandoned site, and a possible attractive nuisance for vandals and others. Indeed, there have been recent break-ins and damage, as well as other signs of vandalism at the buildings. Additional expense for security to protect the campus is too costly for the new parish to bear.

It is both unrealistic and uncharitable to expect the new parish to support and maintain a church and other structures it cannot use and has no use for. Simply, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other ecclesiastical funds available to keep and maintain Queen of Apostles Church as a place of Catholic worship. The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to close the church and allow it and the rest of the campus to be sold or otherwise developed for the benefit of the new parish.

The law requires a grave cause or causes to justify the relegation of a church to profane but not sordid use (*CIC*, c. 1222 §2). The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura held a grave cause was entirely apparent when there were these factors: (1) a financial burden in preserving a church imposed on a parish from the union of several parishes; (2) a church no longer of service to the pastoral care of the faithful due to changed circumstances; (3) a new parish burdened from the beginning by a huge debt; (4) ready and effective assistance available to the new parish from the sale of a church; (5) a diminishing number of faithful whose

donations principally sustain the new parish; and (6) charity and other assistance to the poor being neglected to preserve a sacred building (Ministerium Iustitiae: *Jurisprudence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura*, Montreal: W & L (2011): Prot. N. 24388/93 CA, pp. 526-527). The situation of Queen of Apostles Church entails all these factors and more. Moreover, there is no governmental support for building or maintaining churches in the USA.

Relegation of Queen of Apostles Church to profane but not sordid use, according to canon 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, enhances the possibility that the church and other real property assets of the former St. Mary, Queen of Apostles Parish would become a source of income for Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude, its parishioners, and its missions.

The Reverend Gosbert Rwezahura, pastor of Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish, supports the need and desire to relegate Queen of Apostles Church in Riverdale, Illinois, to profane but not sordid use and, with the *major et sanior pars* of the parishioners, desires to see the parish community move forward without the financial and other burdens of caring for Queen of Apostles Church.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norm of canons 50 & 51, 127 §§1 & 3, 166, and 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, having convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago at the general meeting on September 10, 2019, at St. Cletus Parish in La Grange, Illinois, having heard the Council support the measure to relegate Queen of Apostles Church to profane but not sordid use, and after invoking the Holy Spirit and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, now

decree the following:

1. On Sunday September 15, 2019, the clergy and parishioners of Queen of Apostles Church of Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish, 2017 West 145th Street, Riverdale, Illinois 60827, will celebrated a final Sunday Mass at the Queen of Apostles Church, officially marking its closing;
2. Queen of Apostles Church of Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish in Riverdale and South Holland, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use effective September 16, 2019;
3. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the Pastor of Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish will make certain the assets of the former St. Mary, Queen of Apostles Parish, including Queen of Apostles Church, are secure for the benefit of Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish;
4. The real property assets of the former parish of St. Mary, Queen of Apostles are to provide Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish with proceeds from the alienation or income from rental under lease;
5. The report given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the meeting on September 10, 2019, are, when available, to be attached to this decree; and

Decree
Prot. N. 2019 RPU-2
September 13, 2019
Page 4

6. Notification of this decree is to be made to the Pastor of Holy Ghost and SS. Mary and Jude Parish in Riverdale and South Holland, Illinois, and to the parishioners of the parish through publication on the website of the Archdiocese of Chicago and in the parish bulletin.

Given this 13th day of September, A.D. 2019.
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,
Chicago, Illinois

Blase Cardinal Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago



R. P. Stake
Rev. Ronald P. Stake
Associate Vicar for Canonical Affairs
Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

WHEN AVAILABLE, DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MINUTES OF THE RELEVANT MEETING
OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MAY BE REQUESTED FROM
THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS