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Prot. N. 2019 RPU-3

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, and now called Christ Our Savior Parish. The parish church is now St. Jude the Apostle Church, 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 nearly 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 Christ Our Savior Parish has been unduly burdened with buildings and costs it does not need and cannot reasonably use or afford. Notable are the ordinary maintenance and other expenses associated with the ownership and use of the real property of Holy Ghost Church of the former Holy Ghost Parish. Until now Holy Ghost 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 have been diminishing 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. In the last three years bills for expenses associated with Holy Ghost Church have been in default to the amount of \$151,139.00. An estimated annual savings of \$80,000.00 will accrue to the benefit of the new parish if Holy Ghost Church were closed.

Since the extinctive union of March 18, 2019, Christ Our Savior Parish also had Queen of Apostles Church, closed by my decree of September 13, 2019, for many reasons, including vandalism and safety concerns related to a church without resident staff. The remaining church, the parish church of St. Jude the Apostle 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, about two miles from Holy Ghost Church. It is in relatively good repair and has had an average Sunday assembly of 359, more than 25% higher than Holy Ghost Church, and operating income of \$355,139.00, more than 30% higher than Holy Ghost Church.

Apart from maintenance and operating expenses, declining attendance, and shrinking income at Holy Ghost 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 new parish has been unable to support parish functions on the church campus. Consequently, the church campus will soon become a virtually abandoned site and a possible attractive nuisance for vandals and others. Additional expense for security to protect the campus is too costly for the new parish or the archdiocese 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 Holy Ghost Church as a place of Catholic worship. The reasonable and safe solution is to close the church and allow it and the rest of the Holy Ghost 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 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 Holy Ghost Church entails all these factors and more. Moreover, there is no governmental support for building or maintaining church property in the USA.

Relegation of Holy Ghost 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 of the former Holy Ghost Parish would become a source of income for Christ Our Savior Parish, its parishioners, and its missions.

The Reverend Gosbert Rwezahura, pastor of Christ Our Savior Parish, supports the need and desire to relegate Holy Ghost Church in South Holland, 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 at St. Jude the Apostle Church, without the financial and other burdens of caring for unneeded properties, including all the properties of the former Holy Ghost Parish.

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 regular meetings on September 10, 2019, at St. Cletus Parish, La Grange, Illinois, and on November 5, 2019, at St. Monica Parish, 5136 North Nottingham Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60656-3696, and having heard the Council's deliberations and support for the proposal to relegate Holy Ghost Church, South Holland, Illinois, 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. The clergy and parishioners of Holy Ghost Church of Christ Our Savior Parish, in South Holland, Illinois, celebrated a final Sunday Mass of Thanksgiving at Holy Ghost Church;
2. Holy Ghost Church of Christ Our Savior Parish, South Holland, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use effective November 12, 2019;
3. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the Pastor of Christ Our Savior Parish will make certain the assets of the former Holy Ghost Parish, including Holy Ghost Church, are secure for the benefit of Christ Our Savior Parish;
4. The real property assets of the former parish of the Holy Ghost are to provide Christ Our Savior Parish with proceeds from alienation or income from rental under lease;
5. The report given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the meetings on September 10, 2019, and November 5, 2019, are, when available, to be attached to this decree; and

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6. Notification of this decree is to be made to the Pastor of Christ Our Savior Parish in Riverdale and South Holland, Illinois, and to the parishioners of the parish through publication in the parish bulletin and on the website of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Before hierarchical recourse [appeal] may be taken against this decree, a petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be presented to me at my office within ten useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).

Given this 7th day of November, A.D. 2019.
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Rev. Mr. Daniel G. Welter, JD
Chancellor

Attachments

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