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Prot. N. 2020 RPU-1

## 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 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,736,000 today.

Many of our parishes have received generous financial subsidies from the people of the archdiocese. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2019 these subsidies amounted to \$160,014,332.00, including \$40,039,909.00 to 115 parishes, and \$119,974,423.00 to 93 Catholic schools. Last year alone, the archdiocese provided \$4,448,745.00 to parishes and \$13,511,371.00 to Catholic schools. Little of this money is expected to be recovered, and the generous population of the Archdiocese of Chicago cannot continue this level of financial support while the overall population decreases and the number of Catholic faithful regularly attending Mass declines. Our hope is that our parishes will be more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. To achieve this hope, the parishes must be able to support their churches and ministries when possible.

Following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, my decree of April 15, 2019, effected the extinction of the separate juridic persons All Saints-St. Anthony Parish and St. Mary of Perpetual Help Parish of in the Bridgeport neighborhood of the Southside of the City of Chicago. They were united on July 1, 2019, in one new parish with the *ad interim* name of St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish.

The Catholic population of the area has decreased significantly since 1990. This is indicated by the continuing decline in Mass attendance at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 48% since the year 2000: 704 to 364. The new parish church of St. Mary of Perpetual Help is about one mile from St. Anthony of Padua Church. It seats 1,200, more than is needed to accommodate the less than 1,000 parishioners regularly attending Sunday Mass in the parish.

In holding the assets and liabilities of the two united parishes, St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony 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 St. Anthony of Padua Church. The church was in regular use until June 30, 2019, when the parochial community determined to celebrate most of the parish Masses and other liturgies at St. Mary of Perpetual Help Church.

Apart from maintenance and operating expenses, declining use, and no income generated at St. Anthony of Padua Church, it must also be noted that the church campus has no full-time personnel on site. For most of the week the church campus has become an almost

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abandoned site that may threaten the integrity of the buildings and the health and safety of area residents. Additional measures to further secure the buildings are costly and would divert resources away from the parish's work of evangelization and charity.

It is both unrealistic and does not support the work of charity to expect the new parish to 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 St. Anthony of Padua Church as a place of Catholic worship. The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to relegate the church to profane but not sordid use (*CIC*, c. 1222 §2), allowing it and the rest of the church 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. The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura held a grave cause was entirely apparent when these factors were present: (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 St. Anthony of Padua Church entails or will entail all these factors and more if the church is not relegated to profane but not sordid use and sold for the benefit of the new parish. Moreover, there is no governmental support for building or maintaining churches in the USA.

Relegation of St. Anthony of Padua 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 All Saints-Sr. Anthony Parish would become a source of income for the new parish, its parishioners, and its missions

The Reverend Thomas Aschenbrenner, pastor of the new St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish, supports the need and desire to relegate St. Anthony of Padua Church in Bridgeport 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 owning and caring for St. Anthony of Padua Church.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to canons 50 & 51, 127 §§1 & 3, 166, and 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on September 10, 2019, at St. Cletus Parish, La Grange, Illinois, and on January 27-28, 2020, at Mundelein Seminary, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois, to consider the matter. Having heard the Council's deliberations and vote of 33 for and 0 against the proposal to relegate St. Anthony of Padua Church, 518 West 28<sup>th</sup> Place, Chicago, Illinois 60616-2508, to profane but not sordid use, and after invoking the Holy Spirit and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, I now

**decree the following:**

1. Effective immediately, St. Anthony of Padua Church of St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish in the Bridgeport neighborhood of the Southside of the City of Chicago is relegated to profane but not sordid use;

2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the Pastor of St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish will make certain the assets of the former All Saints-St. Anthony Parish, including St. Anthony of Padua Church, are secure for the benefit of St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish;

3. The real property assets of the former All Saints-St. Anthony Parish are to provide St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish with proceeds from the alienation of the property or income from rental under lease;

4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the meetings on September 10, 2019, and January 27-28, 2020, are to be attached to this decree and will be available upon request; and

5. Notification of this decree is to be made to the Pastor of St. Mary of Perpetual Help, All Saints, and St. Anthony Parish in the Bridgeport neighborhood of the Southside of the City of Chicago and to the parishioners of the same parish through publication on the website of the Archdiocese of Chicago and in the parish bulletin.

*Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, signed, and dated petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).*

Given this 11<sup>th</sup> day of March, A.D. 2020.  
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago



  
Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

WHEN AVAILABLE, DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF  
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2019, AND  
JANUARY 27-28, 2020, COUNCIL MEETINGS MAY BE REQUESTED FROM  
THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS