



Prot. N. 2020 RPU-12

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On January 14, 2019, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree establishing a new parish through the extinctive union of St. Germaine Parish in Oak Lawn, Illinois, and Our Lady of Loretto Parish in Hometown, Illinois. The union was effective from July 1, 2019 and the new parish is now known as Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish.

On September 12, 2020, after consulting with the parish pastoral council, the parish finance council, and other members of the parish, the Reverend Thomas S. Cabala, pastor of the new Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish, discerned that the continued use of both churches of his parish was not feasible. Consequently, he wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that Our Lady Loretto Church of the new parish be relegated to profane but not sordid use (*CIC* c. 1222 §2).

A church may be relegated to profane but not sordid use when, after hearing the presbyteral council, the diocesan bishop determines the existence of a grave cause or grave causes suggesting a church no longer be used for divine worship and the good of souls suffers no detriment from the relegation. A Definitive Sentence of the College of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura given May 4, 1996, illuminated what constituted grave causes required for the relegation to profane but not sordid use of a church belonging to a parish formed from the union of parishes (*Ministerium Iustitiae: Jurisprudence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura*, Montreal: W & L (2011): Prot. N. 24388/93 CA, pp. 526-527).

As related in the Definitive Sentence, a new parish formed from the extinctive union of five parishes sought to relegate three of its five churches to profane but not sordid use. Faithful who worshipped at one of these churches took recourse against the relegation of their church. The Supreme Tribunal found that the following conditions together constituted the grave causes required for relegation: (1) preservation of all the churches would impose an intolerable burden on the new parish; (2) the church in question was no longer of service to the pastoral care of the faithful due to changed circumstances; (3) the new parish was burdened from the beginning by a huge debt; (4) sale of the church would offer ready and effective assistance, otherwise lacking, to the urgent needs of the new parish; (5) the number of faithful contributing to the support of the parish was diminishing; and (6) charity and other assistance to the poor should not be neglected in order to preserve a sacred building.

In this case it is established that (1) Retaining Our Lady of Loretto Church as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on the new parish from operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church and other buildings on the church campus. If maintained,



Decree  
Prot. N. 2020 *RPU*-12  
November 2, 2020  
Page 2

for parish use, the campus of Our Lady of Loretto Church will require more than \$763,000.00 in repairs. Of this amount \$228,300.00 would be for the church alone.

(2) Our Lady of Loretto Church is no longer needed for divine worship for the 166 persons regularly attending Sunday Mass there in October count of 2019. The total number of worshippers in the new parish is well accommodated in St. Germaine Church, the nearby parish church.

(3) The total debt of the new parish is \$1,552,246.00. All this debt is carried over from the former Our Lady of Loretto Parish. If Our Lady of Loretto Church is retained, income from the new Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish will be too little to service the debt. The most recent annual income from the former Our Lady of Loretto Parish totaled \$241,720.00. This amount is insufficient to cover adequately the needs of the church within the new parish.

(4) Sale or rental of the real property of the former Our Lady of Loretto Parish, including Our Lady of Loretto Church, will benefit the mission of the new parish with ready cash proceeds. Furthermore, there will be immediate additional savings of at least \$100,000.00 annually from unspent operation and maintenance expenses, and more from unspent capital repairs.

(5) As stated, the total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at Our Lady of Loretto Church was 166 in Fiscal Year 2019, a nearly 60% decline since Fiscal Year 2004. The combined weekly Sunday Mass attendance at the two churches of the new parish was approximately 973 in October 2019. As indicated, this total is fully accommodated at the 700-seat parish church of St. Germaine.

(6) Preserving Our Lady of Loretto Church for any parochial use will result in continued and unneeded operational and maintenance costs that will cripple the ability of the new Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish to serve the poor, enhance its evangelical mission, and remain viable.

Finally, arrival of the novel coronavirus pandemic of COVID-19 has substantially diminished the United States economy, materially and negatively changing the financial well-being of the archdiocese, the new parish, and many poor, working-class, and middle-class families. There is a real concern for the long-term economic survival of our institutions.

It is unreasonable to expect a parish formed from the union of two parishes to maintain a church it cannot afford and is no longer useful for divine worship. There are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known funds available to keep and maintain Our Lady of Loretto Church as a place of Catholic worship. Furthermore, there is no governmental financial assistance for maintaining churches in the United States of America. The reasonable and safe solution for the new parish is to relegate Our Lady of Loretto Church to profane but not sordid use, allowing it and the rest of the church's campus to be sold or otherwise developed for the benefit of the new parish, its ministries, and the work of charity.





Decree  
Prot. N. 2020 RPU-12  
November 2, 2020  
Page 3

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of the Code of Canon Law, electronically convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* the Internet on October 27, 2020, and again on November 2, 2020. Hearing the council's deliberations and its November 2<sup>nd</sup> vote of 35 for and 1 against the proposal to relegate Our Lady of Loretto Church of Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment and that St. Germaine Church is sufficient for the needs of the new parish, I

***decree the following:***

1. Effective December 1, 2020, Our Lady of Loretto Church of the new Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish in Oak Lawn and Hometown, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;

2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the pastor of Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish, will assure the real property and other assets of the former Our Lady of Loretto Parish, including Our Lady of Loretto Church, are secure for the benefit of the new parish;

3. The real property assets of the former Our Lady of Loretto Parish are to provide the new Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish with proceeds from alienation of the property or income from rental under lease;

4. When available, the reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings on October 27, 2020, and November 2, 2020, are to be attached to this decree and available upon request from eligible parties; and

5. Notification of this decree is to be made to the pastor of the new parish and to his parishioners through publication on the archdiocesan website 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 sent to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).*

Given this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November, A.D. 2020.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

*Blase J. Cupich*  
Archbishop of Chicago



*[Signature]*

Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

ONCE AVAILABLE, DATA PERTAINING TO THIS DECREE AND SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS OF OCTOBER 27, 2020, AND NOVEMBER 2, 2020, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS