

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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Prot. N. 2021 RPU-12

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On May 22, 2020, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree extinguishing St. Kevin Parish in the Southeast area of the City of Chicago and uniting it in a single new territorial parish with the nearby St. Francis de Sales Parish, St. George (Slovenian) Parish, and Annunciata Parish. The union was effective July 1, 2020. The interim name of the new parish was Annunciata and Saints George, Kevin, and Francis de Sales Parish. By decree dated February 11, 2021, the new parish was given the permanent name of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish.

On August 13, 2021, after consulting parish leadership and members of the parish, the Reverend Walter Yepes, pastor of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish, asked by letter of the same date that St. Kevin Church be relegated to profane but not sordid use (*CIC* c. 1222 §2). He discerned that continued use of St. Kevin Church for Catholic worship is not needed by the new parish and will be a burden to its continued viability.

A church may be relegated to profane but not sordid use when, after hearing the presbyteral council, the diocesan bishop determines there is a grave cause or grave causes suggesting a church should no longer be used for divine worship and that 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, considered what constituted grave causes required for the relegation to profane but not sordid use of a church belonging to a newly established parish following the extinctive union of the church's former parish (See *Ministerium Iustitiae: Jurisprudence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura*, Montreal: W & L (2011); Prot. N. 24388/93 CA, pp. 526-527).

In the case mentioned above, the Supreme Tribunal found that the following conditions together constituted the grave causes required for relegation: (1) preservation of a church 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 to preserve a sacred building.

In this case it is established that (1) Retaining St. Kevin Church as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial and administrative burden on Our Lady of Nazareth Parish. There are operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church and other buildings on the church campus. If maintained, for parish use, the campus of St. Kevin Church will require more than \$464,500.00 in repairs, over \$340,000.00 for the church alone.

(2) St. Kevin Church is not needed for divine worship for the average of 601 Sunday worshippers regularly attending there in FY 2020 (before COVID-19). This number of worshippers is well accommodated at the Sunday Masses celebrated in the 1,000 seat Annunciata Church, the parish church of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish.

(3) In July 2021, the total debt associated with Our Lady of Nazareth Parish was \$3,146,814.00. In the same month the parish had savings on deposit of \$1,148,811.00.

(4) Sale or rental of the real property of the campus of the former St. Kevin Parish, including the St. Kevin Church, will benefit the mission of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate additional savings of at least \$58,315.00 (FY 2019) to \$69,732.00 (FY 2020) annually from unspent maintenance and other expenses, and more from the \$464,500.00 in unspent capital repairs.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at St. Kevin Church was 601 in October 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020). Throughout the present calendar year (January-July 2021), the average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Kevin Church was a combined 120 persons at three Masses, more than an 80% decline since the average attendance of 601 in October 2019. With this decline, the regular income from Sunday offerings is not sufficient to meet the basic operating expenses of the St. Kevin Church campus.

(6) Preserving St. Kevin Church for worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that would cripple the ability of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish to serve the poor, enhance its evangelical mission, and remain viable.

Finally, since March 2020, the arrival of the novel coronavirus pandemic of COVID-19 diminished large parts of the United States economy, materially and negatively changing the financial well-being of the archdiocese, Our Lady of Nazareth Parish, and many poor and middle-class families. There is concern for the long-term economic survival of many institutions. Due to the steep decline in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Kevin Church in 2021 and the consequent inability to sustain regular operations there due to reduced income, the regular schedule of liturgical services was transferred to the parish church of Annunciata in July 2021. Nonetheless, St. Kevin Church has remained available for occasional services.

It is unreasonable to expect Our Lady of Nazareth Parish to keep and maintain a church it cannot afford, does not need, and is no longer useful for divine worship. Furthermore, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known sources of funds available to support continued use

of St. Kevin Church as a place of Catholic worship. Moreover, there is no governmental assistance for building or maintaining churches in the United States of America.

The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to relegate St. Kevin 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 Our Lady of Nazareth Parish, its ministries, and the work of charity.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of the Code of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago at St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois, on September 7, 2021, and again electronically via the Internet on October 14, 2021. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's October 14th vote of 27 for and one against the proposal to relegate St. Kevin Church of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, and that the parish church of Annunciata is sufficient for the needs of the new parish,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective immediately, St. Kevin Church of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish on 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 Our Lay of Nazareth Parish, will assure the real property and other assets of the former St. Kevin Parish, including St. Kevin Church, are secure for the benefit of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish in Chicago;
3. If alienated, the real property assets of the former St. Kevin Parish are to provide Our Lady of Nazareth Parish with proceeds from sale of the property or rental under lease, the proceeds from sale or lease;
4. Once approved, the reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings of September 7, 2021, and October 14, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and available upon request from eligible parties; and
5. Notification of this decree is to be made immediately through publication on the Archdiocesan Website. The decree is then to be sent to the pastor of Our Lady of Nazareth Parish for communication to his parishioners through publication in the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

*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 or delivered to the Archbishop of Chicago within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734,*


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1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocese of Chicago, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

Given this 4<sup>th</sup> day of November, A.D. 2021.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago



  
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 SEPTEMBER 7, 2021, AND OCTOBER 14, 2021, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS**