



Office of the Archbishop  
835 North Rush Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312.534.8230  
archchicago.org

Prot. N. 2021 RPU-8

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On February 25, 2021, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree extinguishing St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Oak Lawn, Illinois, dividing its territory, and equally dividing its assets and liabilities among three neighboring parishes, St. Gerald Parish, also in Oak Lawn, St. Albert the Great Parish, Burbank, Illinois, and St. Fabian Parish, Bridgeview, Illinois. The extinction of St. Louis de Montfort Parish and division of its territory took effect July 1, 2021.

On May 27, 2021, after consulting parish leadership and the pastors of St. Gerald Parish, St. Albert the Great Parish, and St. Fabian Parish, the Reverend Stanley Stuglik, pastor of the then St. Louis de Montfort Parish, discerned that continued use of St. Louis de Montfort Church for Catholic worship would not be needed and would be a burden to the Catholics of the area, especially to St. Gerald Parish, within whose expanded boundaries the church is now located. The Reverend Robert M. Pajor, pastor of St. Gerald Parish, by letter dated August 31, 2021, concurred with the conclusions of Father Stuglik, joining a request to me and the Episcopal Vicar for his area to consider relegating St. Louis de Montfort Church 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 there are "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, considered what constituted grave causes required for the relegation to profane but not sordid use of churches belonging to a new parish following the extinction 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).

A parish obtaining a church from an extinguished parish through division of the territory of the extinguished parish entails a type of extinctive union, in this case four parishes are now three. Here, both the former pastor of St. Louis de Montfort Church and the pastor of the parish in whose expanded territory the church is now located have asked to relegate this one church to profane but not sordid use. In the case mentioned above, the Supreme Tribunal found that the following conditions together constituted the grave causes required for relegation: (1) the

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. Louis de Montfort Church as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial and administrative burden on St. Gerald Parish and a future financial burden on St. Gerald Parish, St. Albert the Great Parish, and St. Fabian 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. Louis de Montfort Church will require more than \$775,800.00 in repairs, \$260,300.00 for the church/school complex alone (including \$145,000.00 near term replacement of HVAC systems).

(2) St. Louis de Montfort Church is not needed for divine worship for the average of 586 Sunday worshippers regularly attending there in FY 2020 (before COVID-19). This number of worshippers is well accommodated in the nearby churches of the three remaining parishes.

(3) In July 2021 the total debt associated with the extinguished St. Louis de Montfort Parish, now shared by the three remaining parishes, was \$1,670,874.00, offset by savings of \$658.00. The most recent regular annual operating income from the former St. Louis de Montfort Parish was \$288,756.00, down \$76,662.00 from the previous year.

(4) Sale or rental of real property of the former St. Louis de Montfort Parish campus, including the St. Louis de Montfort church/school complex, will benefit the mission of the three remaining parishes with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate additional savings of at least \$100,000.00 annually from unspent maintenance expenses, and more from the \$775,800.00 in unspent capital repairs.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at St. Louis de Montfort Church was 586 in October 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020), a 16% decline over five years, a 40% decline over 10 years, and a 46% decline over 15 years.

(6) Preserving St. Louis de Montfort Church for worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that would cripple the ability of the three remaining parishes, especially St. Gerald 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 has affected the United States economy, materially and negatively challenged the financial well-being of the archdiocese, the three remaining parishes, and many poor and middle-class families. There is a real concern for the long-term economic survival of many institutions.

It is unreasonable to expect the three remaining parishes to keep and maintain a church they cannot afford, do 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 St. Louis de Montfort Church as a place of Catholic worship. 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. Louis de Montfort 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 three remaining parishes, their 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, electronically convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago via the Internet on June 1, 2021, and again in person on September 7, 2021, at St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's September 7<sup>th</sup> vote of 29 for and none against the proposal to relegate St. Louis de Montfort Church 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 churches of the three remaining parishes are sufficient for their needs,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective immediately, St. Louis de Montfort Church in St. Gerald Parish, Oak Lawn, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the pastor of St. Gerald Parish, will assure the real property and other assets of the former St. Louis de Montfort Parish, including St. Louis de Montfort Church, are secure for the benefit of St. Gerald Parish (Oak Lawn), St. Albert the Great Parish (Burbank), and St. Fabian Parish (Bridgeview);
3. If alienated, the real property assets of the former St. Louis de Montfort Parish are to provide St. Gerald Parish, St. Albert the Great Parish, and St. Fabian Parish with proceeds from sale of the property or rental under lease, the proceeds from sale or lease are to be divided equally among the three parishes;
4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings on June 1, 2021, and September 7, 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 pastors of St. Gerald Parish, St. Albert the Great Parish, and St. Fabian Parish for communication to their parishioners through publication in the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

Decree  
Prot. N. 2021 RPU-8  
September 16, 2021  
Page 4

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

Given this 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, A.D. 2021.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

*Blase Cardinal Cupic*  
Archbishop of Chicago



*Rev. Robert Fastele*  
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 JUNE 1, 2021, AND SEPTEMBER 7, 2021, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS