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Prot. N. 2024 RPU-5

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

In the Fall of 1871, shortly before the Great Chicago Fire broke out on October 8 of that year, St. John Nepomucene Parish came into existence as what is now referred to as a personal parish. The parish was established for Catholics of Bohemian origin, retaining that status until it was extinguished on June 30, 1990, by decree of my late eminent predecessor, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. Prior to its extinction, the parish had been an active site for SPRED (Special Religious Development) a ministry of the Archdiocese of Chicago for the religious education of those with special needs. Upon extinction, the parish located at 2956 South Lowe Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60616, reverted to the Archdiocese of Chicago, becoming the SPRED Center, with its church designated as the SPRED Chapel, retaining its dedication to St. John Nepomucene. Having faithfully provided a center of leadership for SPRED over the past 34 years, it is now time to ensure the continued support and funding of SPRED through other means.

By a letter dated May 2, 2024, Tim Weiske, Director of the Department of Parish Vitality and Mission of the Archdiocese of Chicago, under whose auspices SPRED falls, requested that the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene Church 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 there is a "grave cause" indicating a church should no longer be used for divine worship and that the good of souls suffers no detriment from the relegation. In this case the following are established.

(1) Retaining the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene Church as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on SPRED (Archdiocese of Chicago). No income is received from a regular Sunday worship assembly. If maintained for divine worship, the ministry will require an annual expenditure of more than \$50,000.00 for regular maintenance, not including future investment for capital repairs. These costs are unnecessary as the ministry is operationally decentralized, located at multiple parish sites throughout the deaneries of the Archdiocese of Chicago and in the neighboring dioceses of Rockford and Gary.

(2) Without staff, the SPRED Director devotes an undue amount of time to the maintenance of an aging physical plant, one more than 110 years old.

(3) Sale or lease of the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene Church will free the SPRED leadership to focus on SPRED's mission and provide funds for investment in future operations.

Moreover, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known sources of funds available to keep and maintain the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene 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 course is to relegate the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene to profane but not sordid use, selling or developing the property for the benefit of SPRED and its mission.

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 the St. Bernardine campus of St. Luke and St. Bernardine Parish, Forest Park, Illinois, on March 5, 2024, and again at the St. Giles campus of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois, on May 7, 2024. Hearing the council's deliberations and their May 7<sup>th</sup> vote of 33 yes and none against the proposal to relegate the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene Church to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2024, the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene Church in Chicago, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago will assure the real property associated with the SPRED Chapel / St. John Nepomucene Church is secure, and, if alienated, provide SPRED with proceeds from sale of the property or rental under lease;
3. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings on March 5, 2024, and May 7, 2024, are confidential documents and will be appended to this decree upon approval and made available upon the request of eligible parties; and
4. Notification of this decree is to be made immediately through publication on the Archdiocesan Website.

Given this 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, A.D. 2024.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago

  
Ecclesiastical Notary

*Attachments*

*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 by mail 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.*

**ONCE APPROVED, CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS DECREE AND SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS OF MARCH 5, 2024, AND MAY 7, 2024, WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON THE REQUEST OF ELIGIBLE PARTIES TO THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS**