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Prot. N. 2025 RPU-1

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On March 28, 2022, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree, effective July 1, 2022, establishing a new parish through the extinctive union of two neighboring parishes partially on the Westside of the City of Chicago and predominantly in the west suburban community of Oak Park, Illinois: St. Giles Parish (established 1927), 1025 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60302-1237, and St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy Parish (established 1974), 38 North Austin Boulevard, Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4305. The new parish was called St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish. The churches of these two parishes are approximately two and one-half miles apart, a drive of eight minutes.

On February 27, 2025, after consulting with the parish pastoral council and finance council, the pastor of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, the Reverend Carl Morello, came to the opinion that continued use of St. Catherine of Siena Church of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish for divine worship was no longer feasible. Consequently, he wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that St. Catherine of Siena 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. A Definitive Sentence of the College of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura given May 4, 1996, considered what constituted a grave cause required for the relegation to profane but not sordid use of a church belonging to a parish formed from the union of parishes (see *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. The 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 cause 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) from the beginning, the new parish was burdened 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. Catherine of Siena Church of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on the parish due to operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church. If maintained for parish use, the St. Catherine of Siena Church campus would require \$4,200,000 in capital repairs, \$2,200,000.00 for the church alone. These figures are extrapolated, in part, from a study commissioned by the Archdiocese of Chicago dated July 21, 2022, and from other internal estimates.

(2) St. Catherine of Siena Church is not needed for divine worship by St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish. Seating capacity at the parish church, St. Giles, is 750, about 2.5 miles from St. Catherine of Siena Church. This is sufficient to accommodate the total Sunday Mass attendance of the united parish, which was 705 across five Masses in October 2024.

(3) When the new parish was formed from the union of the two parishes, it acquired operating debt from St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy Parish totaling nearly \$1,900,000.00 on October 31, 2021, along with \$210,000.00 in capital debt. Recent revenue from offerings given at St. Catherine of Siena Church has decreased between 2009 and 2021, From \$421,629.00 in Fiscal year 2010 to \$262,533.00 in Fiscal Year 2021.

(4) Sale or rental of St. Catherine of Siena Church will benefit the mission of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish with ready cash proceeds. Furthermore, there will be immediate annual savings of more than \$140,000.00 from unspent regular maintenance expenses, and more from avoided capital repairs.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at St. Catherine of Siena Church was 93 in October 2024 (Fiscal Year 2025), a 53% decline from the last pre-COVID-19 count of 197 regular worshippers in October 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020), and a 72% decline from a count of 334 in October 2014 (Fiscal Year 2015).

(6) Preserving St. Catherine of Siena Church for worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that will cripple the ability of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish to serve the poor, enhance its evangelical mission, and remain viable.

It is unreasonable to expect a parish formed from the extinctive union of two parishes to maintain a church it cannot afford and that is no longer needed for the divine worship of the new parish. Furthermore, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known sources of funds available to keep and maintain St. Catherine of Siena 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 St. Catherine of Siena Church of St. Catherine

of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish to profane but not sordid use, selling or developing the property for the benefit of the new parish, its ministries, and 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 the St. Giles campus of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois, on March 4, 2025, and again on May 6, 2025, at the same location. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's May 6<sup>th</sup> vote of 29 for and none against the proposal to relegate to profane but not sordid use St. Catherine of Siena Church of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish; invoking the Holy Spirit; and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, and that the parish church of St. Giles is sufficient for the needs of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish,


***I decree the following:***

1. Effective immediately, St. Catherine of Siena Church of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, in Chicago and Oak Park, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the pastor of the St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, will assure the real property associated with the St. Catherine of Siena Church campus is secure for the benefit of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish;
3. If alienated, St. Catherine of Siena Church is to provide St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish with proceeds from sale of the property or rental under lease;
4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, the minutes of the council meetings on March 4, 2025, and May 6, 2025, are confidential documents and will be appended to this decree upon approval and made available upon the request of eligible parties; and
5. Notification of this decree is to be made immediately through publication on the Archdiocesan Website and sent to the pastor of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish for communication to parishioners through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

Given this 23rd day of June, A.D. 2025.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago



  
Ecclesiastical Notary

*Attachments*

*Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, and signed petition, asking me to revoke or amend the decree, must be sent or delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (Code of Canon Law, cc. 1734, 1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop of Chicago, Archbishop Quigley Center, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.*

THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS OF MARCH 4, 2025, AND MAY 6, 2025, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM