



Office of the Archbishop  
835 North Rush Street  
Chicago, IL 60611-2030  
312.534.8230  
archchicago.org

Prot. N. 2023 RPU-7

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On February 11, 2021, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree establishing a new parish through the extinctive union of two parishes in West Suburban Cook County: St. Joseph Parish and St. Blase Parish, both in Summit, Illinois. The union was effective July 1, 2021, and the new parish was called, *ad interim*, SS. Joseph and Blase Parish. The extinctive union was challenged by recourse to the then Congregation for the Clergy. By decretal letter dated April 27, 2021, recourse was rejected for failure to make *remonstratio* within the peremptory time permitted by canon 1734 §2. By my decree of January 11, 2022, the new parish was given the permanent new name of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish.

On April 28, 2023, after consulting with the parish finance council and other members of the parish, the Reverend Wojciech Kwiecien, pastor of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish, discerned that continued use of St. Joseph Church, Summit, was no longer feasible. Consequently, he wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that St. Joseph Church of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote 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 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 the 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. 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.



Decree  
Prot. N. 2023 RPU-7  
September 28, 2023  
Page 2

In this case it is established that (1) Retaining St. Joseph Church as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on the new Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish due to operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church. If maintained for parish use, the St. Joseph Church campus will require \$1,415,300.00 in capital repairs, \$332,350.00 for the church alone.

(2) St. Joseph Church is not needed for divine worship for the average of 1,281 Sunday worshippers regularly attending Mass in Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish in FY 2022. All but 299 attended Sunday Mass at St. Blase Church. The parish plans to celebrate a final regularly scheduled Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Church on November 26, 2023. The regular celebration of weekday Masses ceased in mid-2023. Parishioners now attending Mass in Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish will be well accommodated in the 880-seat parish church of St. Blase, 1.1 miles from St. Joseph Church.

(3) As of March 31, 2023, the total debt of the new Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish was \$2,527,147.00, all the debt accumulated at the former St. Joseph Parish. The most recent regular annual operating income from the new parish was \$341,197.00 (Fiscal Year 2022). Such an income is insufficient for the foreseeable needs of maintaining St. Joseph Church alongside St. Blase Church, as well as for contribution to the support of the new parish.

(4) Sale or rental of St. Joseph Church will benefit the mission of the new parish with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate annual savings of at least \$65,000.00 from unspent regular maintenance expenses, and more from the \$1,415,300.00 in unspent capital repairs when the church campus is sold or leased.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish was 1,281 in October 2022. In October 2021, the Sunday attendance was 1,767. The October 2022 figure is more than a 26% decline from the average attendance in October 2021.

(6) Preserving St. Joseph Church for worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that will cripple the ability of new Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote 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. Joseph 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. Joseph Church of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish to profane but not sordid use, selling or developing the property for the benefit of the new parish, its ministries, and charity.



Decree  
Prot. N. 2023 RPU-7  
September 28, 2023  
Page 3


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 Church campus of St. Catherine of Siena-St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois, on May 9, 2023, and again on September 19, 2023. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's September 19<sup>th</sup> vote of 25 yes and one against the proposal to relegate St. Joseph Church of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote 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 St. Blase is sufficient for the needs of the new parish.


***I decree the following:***

1. Effective December 1, 2023, St. Joseph Church of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish in Summit, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the pastor of the new Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish will assure the real property associated with the St. Joseph Church campus is secure for the benefit of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote;
3. If alienated, St. Joseph Church is to provide Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish with proceeds from sale of the property or rental under lease;
4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings on May 9, 2023, and September 19, 2023, 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. It is then to be sent to the pastor of Blessed Martyrs of Chimbote Parish for communication to parishioners through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

Given this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September, A.D. 2023.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago

  
Ecclesiastical Notary

A red circular seal with a serrated edge. The outer ring contains the text "ARCHIDIOECESIS CHICAGIENSIS" in white capital letters. The center features a red shield with a white cross and a white figure, identical to the Archdiocese of Chicago logo.

*Enclosures*



Decree  
Prot. N. 2023 RPU-7  
September 28, 2023  
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 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 MAY 9, 2023, AND SEPTEMBER 19, 2023, WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON THE REQUEST OF ELIGIBLE PARTIES TO THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS