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Prot. N. 2021 RPU-1

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On June 5, 2020, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree establishing a new parish through the extinctive union of St. Henry Parish, St. Margaret Mary Parish, and St. Timothy Parish, all on the Northside of the City of Chicago. The union forming the new parish was effective July 1, 2020 and the new parish was called, *ad interim*, SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish. St. Margaret Mary Church was designated the parish church of the new parish. By decree dated and effective August 7, 2020, the new parish was named Holy Child Jesus Parish.

On February 1, 2021, after consulting with parish leadership, the Reverend Phi Nguyen, Pastor of Holy Child Jesus Parish, determined the continued use of all three churches of his parish was not feasible. Consequently, he wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that St. Timothy Church of Holy Child Jesus 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 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 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. 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 causes 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) 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 in order to preserve a sacred building.

In this case it is established that (1) Retaining St. Timothy Church as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on the new parish from operational and maintenance

expenses associated with the church and other buildings on the church campus. If maintained, for parish use, the campus of St. Timothy Church will require more than \$742,000.00 in repairs, \$619,400.00 for repairs to the church/school building alone.

(2) St. Timothy Church is no longer needed for divine worship for the number of Sunday worshippers regularly attending there (before COVID-19). The number of worshippers is well accommodated in the nearby 600 seat parish church of St. Margaret Mary.

(3) The total debt of the new parish was \$2,095,299.00 in mid-2020. The most recent annual operating income from the former St. Timothy Parish was \$207,822.00 (including rental income). This is insufficient to help support the new parish, service the debt, and meet the foreseeable needs of maintaining St. Timothy Church.

(4) Sale or rental of real property of the former St. Timothy Parish campus, including St. Timothy Church, will benefit the mission of the new parish with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate additional savings of at least \$70,000.00 annually from unspent maintenance expenses, and more from the \$742,800.00 in unspent capital repairs.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at St. Timothy Church was 437 in October 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020), a 46% decline over 20 years. The combined weekly Sunday Mass attendance at the three former parishes was 2,047 in October 2019. This combined total is comfortably accommodated by four or five Sunday Masses offered weekly in the parish church of St. Margaret Mary.

(6) Preserving St. Timothy Church for worship or for any other parish use will result in continued unneeded and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that would cripple the ability of new Holy Child Jesus 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 substantially diminished the United States economy, materially and negatively changed the financial well-being of the archdiocese, the new parish, 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 a parish formed from the extinctive union of three parishes to 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 keep and maintain St. Timothy 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. Timothy 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 new 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, electronically convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* the Internet on February 5, 2021, and again on March 2, 2021. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's March 2nd vote of 30 for and none against the proposal to relegate St. Timothy Church of Holy Child Jesus Parish to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, and that St. Margaret Mary Church is sufficient for the needs of the new parish, I

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2021, St. Timothy Church of Holy Child Jesus Parish on the Northside 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 Holy Child Jesus Parish, will assure the real property and other assets of the former St. Timothy Parish, including St. Timothy Church, are secure for the benefit of Holy Child Jesus Parish;
3. If alienated, the real property assets of the former St. Timothy Parish are to provide Holy Child Jesus 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 February 5, 2021, and March 2, 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. It is then to be sent to the Pastor of Holy Child Jesus Parish for communication to his parishioners through publication in the parish bulletin or by 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 me 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 15th day of April, 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 FEBRUARY 5, 2021, AND MARCH 2, 2021, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS