



Prot. N. 2020 RPU-5

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On June 30, 2008, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, a decree of extinctive union was issued by my predecessor, the late and eminent Francis Cardinal George, OMI. The decree established, through the union of SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, and St. Maurice Parish, all in the McKinley Park neighborhood of City of Chicago, a new territorial parish named Blessed Sacrament Parish. For more than 12 years the new parish made use of all the campuses of the three extinguished parishes, including regular worship at all three churches. The continued use of all three churches is no longer feasible. Consequently, the Reverend Ismael Sandoval-Manzo, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish since July 1, 2013, after consulting his Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council, wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that St. Maurice Church of Blessed Sacrament 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, illuminates what constitute 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. Maurice Church as a place of divine worship, along with the churches of the extinguished SS. Peter and Paul Parish and the extinguished Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, imposes a financial burden on the new parish



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that can no longer be sustained. Indeed, the church needs at least \$228,000.00 for repairs in the face of \$812,373.00 of total parish debt and the ongoing costs of church maintenance.

(2) St. Maurice Church is no longer needed for divine worship because SS. Peter and Paul Church and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church are nearby and more than adequate to serve the approximately 787 persons regularly worshipping in the parish before the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

(3) The total debt of Blessed Sacrament Parish is increasing due to inadequate operating income and loans required for current expenses.

(4) Sale or rental of real property of the former St. Maurice Parish campus, including St. Maurice Church, will benefit the mission of the parish through ready cash proceeds and, in addition, savings of at least \$60,000.00 annually from unspent maintenance expenses.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at St. Maurice Church was approximately 200 in the last Fiscal Year. Indeed, the entire parish Sunday Mass attendance has been only 787. This total is a significant decrease over the last 10-20 years, and it has resulted in substantial reduction of regular financial support from parishioners.

(6) Preserving St. Maurice Church for worship or for any other parish use will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that cripple the ability of Blessed Sacrament Parish to serve the poor.

Finally, since March 2020, arrival of the novel coronavirus pandemic of COVID-19 has materially and negatively altered the financial well-being of the parish and many of its middle- and working-class families, causing real concern about the long-term economic survival.

It is unreasonable to expect a parish formed from the extinctive union of three parishes to maintain a church it can no longer 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. Maurice Church as a place of Catholic worship. One also should be mindful that there is no governmental support for building or maintaining churches in the United States of America.

The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to relegate the 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. In addition to the financial relief provided by a sale of the church campus, such a sale would also result in an immediate annual savings of wasteful maintenance costs and further capital expenditures.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canons 50 & 51, 127 §§1 & 3, 166, and 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, electronically convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* the Internet



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on June 26, 2020, and again on August 4, 2020. Hearing the Council's deliberations and its August 4th vote of 32 for and 1 against the proposal to relegate St. Maurice Church to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment because the parish has nearby two other adequately sized churches, I now

decree the following:

1. Effective September 28, 2020, St. Maurice Church of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Chicago, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, will assure the real property and other assets of the former St. Maurice Parish, including St. Maurice Church, are secure for the benefit of Blessed Sacrament Parish;
3. The real property assets of the former St. Maurice Parish are to provide Blessed Sacrament Parish proceeds from alienation of the property or income from rental under lease;
4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the meetings on June 26, 2020, and August 4, 2020, are to be attached to this decree and available upon request from eligible parties; and
5. Notification of this decree is to be made to the Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, and to the parishioners of the same parish through publication on the website of the Archdiocese of Chicago and in the parish bulletin.

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 to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).

Given this 11th day of September, A.D. 2020.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago





Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

ONCE AVAILABLE, DATA PERTAINING TO THIS DECREE SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS OF JUNE 26, 2020, AND AUGUST 4, 2020, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS