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Prot. N. 2020 RPU-4.5

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, my decree of May 28, 2019, brought about the extinctive union of the separate juridic persons of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, St. Victor Parish, and Our Lady of Knock Parish, all in Calumet City, Illinois. They were united on July 1, 2019, as one parish under the new name of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish.

The total population of Calumet City has decreased by less than three percent since the 2010 national census. The population is now approximately 70% African American, 18% Hispanic, and nearly 12% of European ancestry. The population of Hispanic and European origin is predominately Catholic, while the African American population is overwhelmingly non-Catholic. Before the union, the churches of the three parishes drew a significant number of the faithful for Sunday Mass, a combined average of 1,709 worshippers in 2017 and 1,671 in 2018. However, this was a 50% decline from the attendance figures of the late 1990s. Most parishioners attended the Spanish Masses at St. Victor Church and Our Lady of Knock Church, while Our Lady of Knock Church hosted the majority of the African American faithful, and St. Andrew the Apostle Church hosted an English speaking assembly, including residents of the neighboring Diocese of Gary in the State of Indiana.

Before the union on July 1, 2019, none of the three parishes was indebted to the Archdiocese of Chicago; however, there was a combined \$156,088.00 operating deficit reported in Fiscal year 2017, and each parish was struggling to meet its financial needs. None had the expected annual operating income of \$750,000.00. Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish had \$665,783.00 in the bank on December 31, 2019. At the same time, more than \$2,000,000.00 in capital needs had been identified for facilities on the St. Andrew the Apostle and Our Lady of Knock campuses. In the second half of 2019, Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish and the archdiocese spent \$396,250.00 to demolish the unsafe school building and convent on the St. Victor campus. Dating back to September 2017 there is an additional estimated \$677,000.00 identified for needed capital improvements to St. Victor Church and parking lot.

In January 2020, after consulting parishioners and members of his parish unification council, the Reverend Luis Valerio Romero, now Pastor of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish in Calumet City, petitioned the Archbishop of Chicago to consider relegating the parish's St. Victor Church to profane but not sordid use according to canon 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law. The petition indicated a desire that the church and other real property of the former St. Victor Parish be sold in order to save the parish the growing expenses of ordinary maintenance and forestall expenditure of the now more than \$700,000.00 required for needed capital improvements of the church and parking lot. The request further indicated that regularly scheduled Sunday liturgies were being celebrated at St. Andrew the Apostle Church and Our Lady of Knock Church.

It is unreasonable to expect a new parish formed from the extinctive union of three parishes to maintain a church it cannot afford, does not need, and that is no longer useful to the new parish. Furthermore, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known sources of funds available to keep and maintain St. Victor Church as a place of Catholic worship. One also must be mindful that there is no governmental support for building or maintaining churches in the United States. The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to relegate the church to profane but not sordid use (*CIC*, c. 1222 §2), allowing it and the rest of the church 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, relegation to profane use will result in an immediate annual savings in wasteful maintenance costs and in future capital expenditure.

The law requires a grave cause or causes to justify the relegation of a church to profane but not sordid use. The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura held a grave cause was entirely apparent when these factors were present: (1) a financial burden in preserving a church imposed on a parish from the union of several parishes; (2) a church no longer of service to the pastoral care of the faithful due to changed circumstances; (3) a new parish burdened from the beginning by a huge debt; (4) ready and effective assistance available to the new parish from the sale of a church; (5) a diminishing number of faithful whose donations principally sustain the new parish; and (6) charity and other assistance to the poor being neglected to preserve a sacred building (*Ministerium Iustitiae: Jurisprudence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura*, Montreal: W & L (2011): Prot. N. 24388/93 CA, pp. 526-527). The situation of St. Victor Church entails all these factors except the third, a huge debt. However, operating deficits and the financial consequences of the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 must also be considered. If the church is not relegated to profane but not sordid use soon and sold for the benefit of the new parish, the situation will deteriorate and cause further economic harm to Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish.

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, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on January 27, 2020, and again on January 28, 2020, at Mundelein Seminary, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois. Hearing the Council's deliberations and its January 28th vote of 33 for and 0 against the proposal to relegate St. Victor Church of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish, Calumet City, Illinois, 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 two other fully functional churches, nearby, in good repair, and in constant use; and noting a delay in organizing a farewell liturgical celebration at St. Victor Church for August 6, 2020, due to the closure of churches during the pandemic of COVID-19 and the now careful reopening of churches, I now

decree the following:

1. Effective immediately, St. Victor Church in Calumet City, Illinois, a church of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;

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2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the Pastor of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish, Calumet City, will make certain the real property and other assets of the former St. Victor Parish, including St. Victor Church, are and remain secure for the benefit of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish;

3. The real property assets of the former St. Victor Parish are to provide Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish proceeds from the 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 January 27, 2020, and January 28, 2020, are to be attached to this decree and will be available upon request; and


5. Notification of this decree is to be made to the Pastor of Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish, Calumet City, 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 7th day of August, A.D. 2020.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

WHEN AVAILABLE, DATA PERTAINING TO THIS DECREE SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS ON JANUARY 27, 2020, AND JANUARY 28, 2020, MAY BE REQUESTED FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS