



Office of the Archbishop
835 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312.534.8230
archchicago.org

Prot. N. 2022 RPU-4

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 three churches of the extinguished parishes. In 2020 it became apparent that continued use of all three churches was 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). That relegation took effect on September 28, 2020, by my decree dated September 11, 2020. Hierarchical recourse against the decree of September 11, 2020, was rejected by the Congregation for the Clergy on February 27, 2021 (Prot. N. 2921 0039).

More recently, the pastor again consulted his parish pastoral council and finance council regarding the continued use of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. By letter addressed to me and the regional Episcopal Vicar on October 1, 2021, the pastor requested that Our Lady of Good Counsel Church of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, 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 cause 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) 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 to preserve a sacred building.

In this case it is established that (1) Retaining Our Lady of Good Counsel Church of Blessed Sacrament Parish as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on Blessed Sacrament Parish from operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church. If maintained for parish use, the Our Lady of Good Counsel Church campus will require more than \$600,000.00 in capital repairs, at least \$150,000.00 for the church alone. Moreover, Blessed Sacrament Parish will have the burden of unnecessary administrative costs for maintaining a church it does not need.

(2) Our Lady of Good Counsel Church is not needed for divine worship for the average number of Sunday worshippers regularly attending there in FY 2020 (before COVID-19). The total count of worshippers in October 2019 was 787 for the entire parish, including those at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. This number is well accommodated less than one-half mile away at SS. Peter and Paul Church, the parish church of Blessed Sacrament Parish.

(3) On July 31, 2021, the combined debt of Blessed Sacrament Parish was \$1,151,014.00 offset by cash assets of only \$31,621.00 on deposit. Proceeds from the Fiscal Year 2020 regular offertory collections at Blessed Sacrament Parish, including from those attending Our Lady of Good Counsel Church were \$225,144.00, insufficient to meet ordinary operating expenses of the parish.

(4) Sale or rental of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and the other real property of the church campus will benefit the mission of Blessed Sacrament Parish with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate additional savings of at least \$90,000.00 annually, based on maintenance expenditures in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020, and more from the more than \$600,000.00 in unspent capital repairs.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at Blessed Sacrament Parish (including Our Lady of Good Counsel Church) was 787 in October 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020), a nearly 18% decline over ten years and a near 50% decline since Fiscal Year 2006. The average offertory collections decreased by more than 37% since Fiscal year 2009, from \$358,989.00 to \$225,144.00.

(6) Preserving Our Lady of Good Counsel Church for divine worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that will cripple the ability of Blessed Sacrament 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 diminished large parts of the United States economy, materially and negatively changing the financial well-being of the archdiocese, some of our parishes, and many poor and middle-class

families. There is concern for the long-term economic survival of some institutions.

It is unreasonable to expect a parish formed from the union of three parishes to maintain a church it can longer not afford, does not need, and which is no longer useful for divine worship. Moreover, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known sources of funds available to keep and maintain Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish 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 course is to relegate Our Lady of Good Counsel Church of Blessed Sacrament Parish to profane but not sordid use, allowing it 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, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago electronically *via* the internet on October 14, 2021, and again on November 9, 2021, at St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's November 9th vote of 35 for and one against the proposal to relegate Our Lady of Good Counsel Church of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, and that SS. Peter and Paul Church, the parish church of Blessed Sacrament Parish is sufficient for the needs of the faithful,

I decree the following:

1. Effective immediately, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Chicago 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 associated with Our Lady of Good Counsel Church is secure for the benefit of Blessed Sacrament Parish;
3. If alienated, the alienation of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church is to provide Blessed Sacrament Parish the proceeds from sale of the real property or rental under lease;
4. When approved, the reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings of October 14, 2021, and November 9, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and available upon request to 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 Sacrament Parish for communication to parishioners through publication in the parish bulletin or 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 the Archbishop of Chicago within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734,


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1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocese of Chicago, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

Given this 11th day of January, A.D. 2022.
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 OCTOBER 14, 2021, AND NOVEMBER 9, 2021, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS