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Prot. N. 2022 RPU-11

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On May 23, 2016, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree extinguishing Providence of God Parish in the Pilsen neighborhood of the City of Chicago and uniting it with the adjacent St. Procopius Parish. The union was effective July 1, 2016.

On September 17, 2021, and January 10, 2022, the Reverend Adan Sandoval, pastor of St. Procopius Parish, after consulting his parish pastoral council and parish finance council, discerned the continued use of Providence of God Church for worship was no longer feasible for St. Procopius Parish. Consequently, he wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that Providence of God Church 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. 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 Providence of God Church of St. Procopius Parish as a place of divine worship, imposes a financial burden on the parish from the operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church. If maintained for parish use, the Providence of God Church campus will require \$1,900,000.00 in capital repairs, \$600,000.00 for the church alone. Moreover, St. Procopius Parish will have the burden of the annual costs for maintaining a church.

(2) Providence of God Church is not needed for divine worship for the average of 466 Sunday worshippers regularly attending there before the union of Providence of God Parish with St. Procopius Parish. Indeed, while other liturgies have been held at Providence of God Church in recent years, Sunday Mass has not been celebrated there for more than four years. Those who worshipped at Providence of God Church are now well accommodated in the 800-seat parish church of St. Procopius.

(3) On December 31, 2021, the combined debt of St. Procopius Parish was \$930,028.00, offset by savings of \$549,491.00 on deposit.

(4) Sale or rental of Providence of God Church would benefit the mission of St. Procopius Parish with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate additional savings of at least \$90,000.00 annually, based on maintenance expenditures in recent years.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at Providence of God Church was 466 in October 2015 (Fiscal Year 2016), more than a 15% decrease over the 551 attending in October 2004 (Fiscal Year 2005). Over the same period, the average offertory collections increase slightly, from \$94,245.00 to \$102,266.00.

(6) Preserving Providence of God Church for divine worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that will cripple the ability of St. Procopius Parish to serve the poor, enhance its evangelical mission, and remain viable.

Finally, since March 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic of COVID-19 has diminished 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 new parish formed from the union of two parishes to continue maintaining a church it cannot 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 Providence of God 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 course is to relegate the church 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 January 17, 2022, and again on January 18, 2022. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's January 18th vote of 31 for and one against the proposal to relegate Providence of God Church of St. Procopius Parish to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no

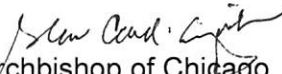
detriment, and that the parish church of St. Procopius is sufficient for the needs of the faithful,

I decree the following:


1. Effective immediately, Providence of God Church of St. Procopius Parish in the Pilsen neighborhood 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 St. Procopius Parish will assure the real property associated with Providence of God Church is secure for the benefit of St. Procopius Parish;
3. If alienated, the alienation of Providence of God Church is to provide St. Procopius Parish with 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 January 17, 2022, and January 18, 2022, 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 St. Procopius 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, 1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocese of Chicago, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

Given this 14th day of February, 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 JANUARY 17, 2022, AND JANUARY 18, 2022, MAY BE
REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS**