



DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On January 25, 2024, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Joliet, I issued a decree extinguishing St. Paul the Apostle Parish, St. Patrick Parish, St. Jude Parish and Sacred Heart Parish. The decree extinguished all four parishes as separate juridic persons, and they were united to form one new territorial parish. The union of this new juridic person was effective from July 1, 2024. In the decree dated April 18, 2024, this new parish was named Queen of Apostles Parish.

The parishioners of the aforementioned parishes were consulted in two different sessions so that all could be heard. In these meetings, parishioners were informed that the church building could be reduced to profane but not sordid use. Moreover, Rev. Michael Lane, Moderator *in solidum* and representative of the new juridic person, supports the relegation of Sacred Heart Church to profane but not sordid use. Consequently, I, in consultation with the Presbyteral Council, have decided to relegate **Sacred Heart Church** to profane but not sordid use (*CIC/83*, can. 1222).

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. Christ’s 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 the case of Sacred Heart Church, it is established that: 1) the church building would impose an intolerable burden on Queen of Apostles Parish from a financial point of view; 2) due

to the decrease in the overall Catholic population of Joliet, within its small geographical boundaries, the church is no longer of service to the current parishioners of the new parish; 3) the new parish has taken on an overall large debt by sustaining four church buildings; 4) the sale of the church building will help keep the new parish out of debt; 5) there has been a significant decrease of parishioners in this church, averaging only 25% mass attendance on Sundays; the remaining church buildings of the new parish will provide more than enough space for all the faithful to receive the sacraments and participate in divine worship; 6) preserving this sacred building would prevent the new parish from providing charity and alms giving to those most in need.

It is unreasonable to expect a new parish formed from the union of four parishes to continue maintaining a church it cannot afford, does not need and which is no longer useful for divine worship. Furthermore, there are no diocesan, parochial or other funds available to keep and maintain Sacred Heart Church as a place of Catholic worship. Additionally, there is no governmental assistance for building or maintaining churches in the United States of America.

The most reasonable and prudent decision 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 works of charity.

THEREFORE, I, the Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks, Bishop of the Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois, in accord with the norms of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Joliet on January 24, 2024 at the Blanchette Catholic Center in Crest Hill Illinois. Having heard the Presbyteral Council at the same meeting, which voted unanimously in favor of relegating Sacred Heart Church to profane but not sordid use I, after invoking the Holy Spirit,

***hereby decree the following:***

1. Effective immediately, Sacred Heart Church, Joliet, of Queen of Apostles Parish is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Diocese of Joliet, cooperating with the pastor of Queen of Apostles Parish will ensure that the real property associated with Sacred Heart Church is secure for the benefit of Queen of Apostles Parish;
3. If the church of Sacred Heart is alienated, the alienation is to provide Queen of Apostles Parish with the proceeds from the sale of the real property or rental under lease;
4. The minutes of the Presbyteral Council meeting are to be included with this decree;
5. The notification of this decree will be given through the official website of the Diocese of Joliet.

*Before hierarchical recourse may be taken against this decree, a 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 '83 cc. 1734; 1735; 1737) at the Blanchette Catholic Center, 16555 Weber Rd., Crest Hill, IL 60403.*

Given on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 2024  
Blanchette Catholic Center  
Crest Hill, IL



*+ Ronald A. Hicks*

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Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks  
Bishop of the Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois

*David Salvato*

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David Salvato, JCD  
Chancellor