



MOST REVEREND DANIEL E. THOMAS
BISHOP OF TOLEDO

DECREE

ON THE REDUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF GOOD SHEPHERD, TOLEDO, OHIO TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

WHEREAS Good Shepherd Parish was established in 1873 for the growing Irish immigrant community in the Diocese of Cleveland, which became part of the Diocese of Toledo in 1910;

WHEREAS in 2005, Good Shepherd Parish was twinned with Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish, also in East Toledo;

WHEREAS on 10 July 2015, the undersigned decreed the extinctive—union merger of Good Shepherd Parish by amalgamation with Epiphany of the Lord Parish;

WHEREAS the undersigned requested consultation from the Presbyteral Council to relegate Good Shepherd Church in accord with the norm of law for the following reasons: (1) Celebration of the Sacraments have not taken place at Good Shepherd Church since 2015, (2) the spiritual needs of the faithful have been and continue to be adequately met at Epiphany of the Lord Parish, (3) the church may be used for another profane purpose in the future, (4) the needs of the diocese have evolved since the founding of Good Shepherd Parish in 1873 such that this church is no longer needed to serve the people of God in the area and there is no longer an influx of Irish immigrants moving to the area, (5) given the decline in the membership of the surrounding parishes, the decline of priestly vocations, it is unreasonable to think that this church would be needed in the future for divine worship, particularly since it has not been in use for nearly ten years;

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WHEREAS when grave causes suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship, the Diocesan Bishop, after having heard the Presbyteral Council, can relegate it to profane but not sordid use, with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment hereby (cf. can. 1222 §2);

WHEREAS to assess the gravity of a cause, each case must be considered individually, weighing the whole context of the situation. At times, the gravity of a cause will arise only from a combination of just causes, each insufficient in itself, but which together manifest the seriousness of the situation (cf. Congregation for the Clergy, *Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes, the Closure or Relegation of Churches to Profane but not Sordid Use, and the Alienation of the Same*, April 30, 2013, Prot. No. 20131348);

WHEREAS after a careful examination, it was established that no one is legitimately able to claim rights for themselves regarding Good Shepherd Church, understood primarily as patrimonial rights or those rights associated with patrimonial rights (cf. Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, Final Decree of the College of Judges, 21 November 1988, *Communicationes* 20 [1988] 93);

WHEREAS the undersigned convoked the Presbyteral Council on 27 September 2023 and presided over it according to the norm of law (cf. cann. 127 §1, 166 §1, and 500 §1), placing the relegation of the church of Good Shepherd on the agenda ahead of time, ensuring that a summary of its status was provided to the members of the Council (cf. can. 50), proposing the relegation, seeking the informed and free counsel of the members concerning the proposed modification (cf. can. 515 §2), listening to arguments either for or against the proposed relegation, and receiving unanimous support for the proposed relegation;

WHEREAS having examined the facts of the present case, the undersigned has determined that it has been well established that grave reasons required by canon 1222 §2 are present, even if some of the reasons invoked may not in themselves constitute a grave cause, however, when combined together they manifest the seriousness of the situation;

Therefore, the undersigned Bishop of Toledo, after prayerful consideration, having weighed all of reasons to relegate Good Shepherd Church and after having heard the Presbyteral Council, hereby issues the following

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The church of Good Shepherd is hereby reduced to profane but not sordid use according to the prescripts of canon 1222, §2 for the grave causes heretofore mentioned.

This decree is effective upon its legitimate publication to all the faithful (cf. can. 54 §1). Within the peremptory period of ten useful days from the legitimate notification of this decree, the faithful may seek in writing from its author the revocation or emendation of this decree before proposing hierarchical recourse (cf. can. 1734 §§1-2).

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Toledo on this fourth day of October in the year of our Lord, two thousand twenty-three.



Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo



Sister Rose Marie Timmer, RSM
Chancellor

