



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

Prot. N. 2021 RPU-4

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

On February 25, 2021, following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, I issued a decree establishing a new parish through the extinctive union of St. Hugh Parish, Lyons, St. Mary Parish, Riverside, and Mater Christi Parish, North Riverside, adjacent parishes in the southwest suburbs of Cook County, Illinois. The union forming the new parish is effective July 1, 2021. The new parish was called, *ad interim*, Mary, Mater Christi, and St. Hugh Parish. By my decree of May 6, 2021, the parish to be formed was given the new name of St. Paul VI Parish.

On April 30, 2021, after consulting with his parish pastoral council, other active parishioners of St. Hugh Parish, and with the support of the Reverend Thomas P. May, pastor of St. Mary Parish, Riverside, and the Reverend Matthew Nemchausky, pastor of Mater Christi Parish, North Riverside, the Reverend Robert Marchwiany, pastor of St. Hugh Parish, Lyons, discerned that the new parish to be formed from the union of three parishes will, from its very beginning, be unable to support the continued use of three churches. Consequently, Father Marchwiany wrote to me and the Episcopal Vicar of his region of the archdiocese, asking that St. Hugh 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” suggesting a church no longer be used for divine worship and that the good of souls would suffer 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 in order to preserve a sacred building.

In this case it is established that (1) Retaining St. Hugh Church as a place of divine worship imposes a financial burden on the new parish from operational and maintenance expenses associated with the church and other buildings on the church campus. If maintained, for parish use, the campus of St. Hugh Church will require more than \$1,220,100.00 in capital repairs over seven years, \$682,350.00 for repairs to the church/school building alone.

(2) The 300-seat St. Hugh Church is not needed for divine worship for the average of 390 Sunday worshippers regularly attending there in FY 2019 (before COVID-19). This number of worshippers will be well accommodated in the nearby 371-seat parish church of St. Mary and the 280-seat Mater Christi Church.

(3) The most recent regular annual operating income at St. Hugh Parish was \$243,352.00 (including rental income). This was against operating expenses of \$360,894.00, yielding an operating deficit of \$117,542.00 in Fiscal Year 2019. This was in succession to a multi-year run of deficits and the consequent depletion of parish savings to meet current expenses.

(4) Sale or rental of the real property of the St. Hugh Parish campus, including the St. Hugh church/school building, will benefit the mission of the new parish with ready cash proceeds. There will be immediate additional savings of at least \$90,000.00 annually from unspent maintenance expenses, and much more in unspent capital repairs.

(5) The total number of faithful regularly worshipping on Sundays at St. Hugh Church was 390 in October 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020). The combined weekly Sunday Mass attendance at the three parishes was 1,772, a 39% decline from 2,868 in Fiscal Year 2000.

(6) Preserving St. Hugh Church for worship will result in continued and unnecessary operational and maintenance costs that would cripple the ability of new St. Paul VI Parish to serve the poor, enhance its evangelical mission, and remain viable.

It is unreasonable to expect a parish formed from the extinctive union of three parishes to maintain a church it cannot afford, does not need, and is no longer useful for divine worship. Furthermore, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other known sources of funds available to keep and maintain St. Hugh Church as a place of Catholic worship. No one has come forward to reveal an existing or even possible source of such financial support and ongoing operational maintenance. There is no governmental assistance for building or maintaining churches in the United States of America.

The reasonable and prudent solution is to relegate St. Hugh Church to profane but not sordid use, beginning at the foundation of new parish on July 1, 2021. This will allow the church/school building and the rest of the church's campus to be sold or otherwise developed for the benefit of the new St. Paul VI 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, electronically convened the Presbyteral Council of the

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Archdiocese of Chicago via the Internet on May 4, 2021, and June 1, 2021. Hearing the council's deliberations and the council's June 1<sup>st</sup> vote of 28 for and one against the proposal to relegate St. Hugh Church in Lyons, Illinois, to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, and that St. Mary Church and Mater Christi Church will be sufficient for the needs of the new St. Paul VI Parish,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2021, St. Hugh Church of then extinguished St. Hugh Parish in Lyons, Illinois, shall be relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the pastor of new St. Paul VI Parish, will assure the real property and other assets of the former St. Hugh Parish, including St. Hugh Church, are secure for the benefit of St. Paul VI Parish;
3. If alienated, the real property assets of the former St. Hugh Parish are to provide St. Paul VI Parish with proceeds from sale of the property or rental under lease;
4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the council meetings on May 4, 2021, and June 1, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and available upon request from 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 Pastors of St. Hugh Parish, Lyons, St. Mary Parish, Riverside, and Mater Christi Parish, North Riverside, for communication to their parishioners through publication in the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

*Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, signed, dated, and well-argued 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 10<sup>th</sup> day of June, A.D. 2021.  
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 MAY 4, 2021, AND JUNE 1, 2021, MAY BE REQUESTED BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS