



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

HIS EXCELLENCY
MOST REVEREND ROBERT D. GRUSS
By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

DECREE
Relegation to Profane but Not Sordid Use of Saint Joseph Church
Argyle, Michigan

THE FACTS

Whereas, the Church of Saint Joseph located at 4960 N. Uby, MI 48410, is one of the worship sites of Good Shepherd Parish in Uby and has served the faithful for many years as a place of prayer, worship and sacramental life;

Whereas, Saint Joseph was designated a parish church in 1906.

Whereas, In July 2013, by decree of the Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw, it was merged with St. John Evangelist in Uby and St. Ignatius in Frieburg and St. Columbkille to form Good Shepherd Parish in Uby.

Whereas, in recent years, the parish has experienced a sustained decline in active membership, resulting in decreased sacramental participation and diminished financial resources;

Whereas, a pastoral and financial review has concluded that the continued maintenance and operation of St. Joseph church site is no longer feasible or prudent;

Whereas, Good Shepherd is facing critical financial difficulties, including sustained deficit spending over several years, in large part due to maintenance of multiple church buildings;

THE LAW

Whereas, in accordance with can. 1212 of the Code of Canon Law, sacred places lose their dedication or blessing if they have been destroyed in large part or if they have been permanently relegated to profane but not sordid use by decree of the competent ordinary or in fact;

Whereas, in accordance with can. 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, where other grave causes suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship, the diocesan bishop, after having heard the Presbyteral Council and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment thereby, may relegate it to profane but not sordid use;

Whereas, can. 515 §2 and can. 87 §1 of the Code of Canon Law affirm the diocesan bishop's authority regarding the erection, suppression, and modification of parishes, as well as the governance of ecclesiastical discipline for the spiritual good of the faithful;

THE ARGUMENT

Whereas, the continued use of St. Joseph church site is no longer justified by the current demographic and financial realities of the parish;

Whereas, the faithful of the parish will continue to have full access to the sacraments and will be fully integrated into the liturgical and pastoral life of Good Shepherd Parish;

Whereas, the parish has experienced a sustained decline in active membership, resulting in diminished participation and reduced financial capacity;

Whereas, this decline renders the continued operation of the multiple worship sites unsustainable;

Whereas, responsible stewardship, ecclesial unity, and pastoral effectiveness require the consolidation of parish resources and activities;

Whereas, the relegation of the building to profane but not sordid use will permit proper stewardship of parish assets and avoid the unnecessary expenditure of parish resources on maintaining a building no longer necessary for divine worship;

Whereas; considering these factors, it is judged pastorally and financially most responsible to consolidate parish resources and to ensure the sustainability of the parish and its mission, having regard to can. 1222 §1 of the Code of Canon Law;

Wherefore:

1. Having carefully considered the law and the facts; and
2. Having heard the Presbyteral Council on October 13, 2025; and
3. Having heard on July 23, 2025 the Pastor and the Parish Pastoral and Finance Council of Good Shepherd Parish, in whose territory the aforesaid property is situated; and
4. Having obtained the consent of those whose rights might be injured or violated, especially the major donors (or: the heirs of the major donor,) in accordance with the norm of canon 1222§2; and
5. Having ensured that the church will be stripped of its altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts; and

6. Having ensured the good of the souls will suffer no harm thereby; that is, the spiritual and pastoral good of the parishioners will continue as it has been provided by Good Shepherd Parish in Ubly;
7. Having ensured that no scandal would arise from the relegation of the church to profane but not sordid use;

DECREE

I, the Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss, Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, by the authority granted to me in canon 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, and after consultation with the Presbyteral Council, hereby pronounce, declare, and decree that St. Joseph Church, located at 4960 N. Ubly Road, Argyle, Michigan, has lost its blessing, dedication, or consecration and is no longer to be used as a place for divine worship.

The altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts are to be removed from the church, insofar as possible, for reuse at Good Shepherd Parish or otherwise transferred to the Diocesan Archives for use by other ecclesiastical entities.

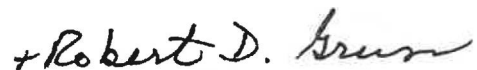
Therefore, the church is hereby relegated to profane but not sordid use, in accordance with canon can. 1222 §2. This decree shall take effect on June 1, 2026.

Everything I have decreed herein is to be observed in all its parts. Anything to the contrary, even if worthy of special mention, notwithstanding, may not be acted upon following the promulgation of this decree.


I further decree that this act be promulgated by publication on the website of the Diocese of Saginaw and on the parish website of Good Shepherd Parish.

In accordance with canons 1734-1737, any party aggrieved by this decree has the right to petition for its revocation or amendment by hierarchical recourse within ten (10) canonical days of its legitimate notification.

Given on this 12th day of May in the year of Our Lord 2026, at the chancery of the Diocese of Saginaw.



Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw



Reverend Alberto E. Vargas, JCL. J.V.
Chancellor