

DECREE

Relegation to Profane but Not Sordid Use Saint Theresa Church

Due to the deteriorating condition of Saint Theresa Church and a lack of the necessary funding to repair and maintain the church, consideration must be given as to whether sufficient grave cause exists for the relegation of Saint Theresa Church to profane but not sordid use.

Whereas the pastor of Good Shepherd Parish, in whose territory Saint Theresa Church is situated, wrote to me out of concern for the fiscal stability of Good Shepherd Parish in order to request that Saint Theresa Church be relegated to profane but not sordid use;

Whereas the following reasons indicate that Saint Theresa Church, located at 600 Herndon Drive, Evansville, Indiana, within the boundaries of Good Shepherd Parish, is no longer able to be used for divine worship:

Whereas Good Shepherd Parish has previously merged by means of extinctive union on 1 July 2016 and has the care of two church buildings, namely, Good Shepherd Church and Saint Theresa Church, which places significant financial expense on the parish for maintenance and repairs of all edifices, giving rise to concern for the fiscal stability of the parish;

Whereas the structure of Saint Theresa Church has deteriorated to the extent that major repairs are necessary, including, but not limited to: replacement of the nearly non-functional heating/boiler and chiller, replacement of the roof which already has a history of significant leaking, and replacement of the deteriorated parking lot; furthermore, settling has occurred as the church is situated over an abandoned coal mine, contributing to severe issues such as mortar cracks ground to roof in the church buttresses as well as crumbling of the church; such expense imposes a considerable financial strain;

Whereas, due to the financial hardship on Good Shepherd Parish related to providing the funding for basic and ongoing maintenance and repairs of Saint Theresa Church, the Diocese of Evansville has assumed that expense since 1 January 2017, demonstrating significant fiscal concern for Good Shepherd Parish;

Whereas Saint Theresa Church was built as a gymnasium structure for temporary use and was never envisioned as the permanent church edifice;

Whereas during the course of the past two years, pastoral activity at Saint Theresa Church has been limited to occasional use for six funerals through March of 2017, no marriages since September of 2015, and no weekday or weekend Masses; requests for occasional use of the church are rare, and other ongoing pastoral initiatives are lacking;

Whereas Saint Theresa Elementary School closed in May of 2015, contributing to an additional lack of pastoral and catechetical activity;

Whereas human resources to contribute to the upkeep of Saint Theresa Church have been found lacking;

Whereas following the pastor's consultation with the parishioners of Good Shepherd Parish, including the parish pastoral council and the parish finance council as well as former parishioners of the previously merged Saint Theresa Parish, no interest was expressed in maintaining use of Saint Theresa Church, particularly because the financial stability of Good Shepherd Parish is jeopardized;

Whereas other reasonable sources of funding for the maintenance of Saint Theresa Church have been considered but found inadequate; it is not prudent stewardship for the Diocese of Evansville to indefinitely provide funding for a church which is in such poor repair and is very minimally used.

Having carefully considered the law and the facts; and

Having heard the pastor of Good Shepherd Parish; and

Having consulted the Dean of the South Deanery; and

Having consulted the members of the Council of Priests and College of Consultors on 29 May 2018 regarding the question of the possible relegation to profane but not sordid use of Saint Theresa Church, and following discussion, no substantial objection to that proposal was offered; the Council of Priests and College of Consultors voted unanimously in favor of the proposal; and

Having ascertained by means of the original deeds and other documents as well as having heard from others that there are no major donors and/or their heirs who may have donated the church edifice and/or the land; and

Having determined that the good of souls will suffer no harm; the celebration of Mass and the sacraments are offered at Good Shepherd Parish.

Therefore, in accord with canons 1212 and 1222 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, and having judged that sufficient grave cause is indeed present, I hereby decree the relegation of Saint Theresa Church to profane but not sordid use. Therefore, it is no longer a sacred place and has lost its blessing, dedication, and consecration; it may no longer be used for divine worship.

The care and upkeep of the former Saint Theresa Church, the property on which the former church sits and any improvements such as the rectory, parish office, and all other adjacent property remain as the financial responsibility of the Diocese of Evansville due to the significant financial burden experienced by Good Shepherd Parish.

Disbursements of any trust funds or foundations for the benefit of the former Saint Theresa Church are hereby transferred to Good Shepherd Parish.

The provisions of this decree shall be effective on 6 August 2018, all things to the contrary notwithstanding. This decree is to be communicated to all interested persons. These provisions may be appealed according to the norm of law, canon 1734 §§1 and 2.

Given at Evansville, Indiana
20 July 2018

Most Reverend Joseph M. Siegel, DD, STL
Bishop of Evansville

Tim McGuire
Chancellor