



DECREE

St. Mary Parish of Houston, Minnesota, was founded in 1872, serving the faithful of the area for 149 years. In 2011 the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, with the assistance of professional consultants, embarked upon Vision 2016: a comprehensive visioning and planning process aimed at providing opportunities to enhance the pastoral care of the faithful, address shortages in clergy and evaluate current parish structures in light of changing demographic trends. Upon the extensive collaboration of clergy and lay leaders throughout the Diocese, the recommended, and eventual merging (*unio extinctiva*), of St. Mary Parish with St. Joseph Parish, Rushford, Minnesota, became effective June 29, 2021.

In a letter presented on May 10, 2021, the Pastor of St. Mary Parish and St. Joseph Parish requested that St. Mary Parish be merged into St. Joseph Parish. The request included documentation as to the current plan to no longer have Mass celebrated in the building, the recommendation of the parish leadership to merge the parishes and subsequently sell the building of St. Mary Parish, and the lack of fiscal and human resources necessary to properly maintain the structure.

The following grave causes suggest that the church building be relegated to profane but not sordid use:

1. That the necessary human and fiscal resources to adequately maintain the structure are no longer available. Hence, maintaining the building as a place of worship would place an excessive burden upon St. Joseph Parish.
2. The people who once attended St. Mary Parish are in close proximity to St. Joseph Parish. Use of the church building for divine worship or any other activity will be infrequent and its sale will promote unity within the parish.
3. Having made public the possibility of the sale or razing of the church building, no member has expressed a legitimate interest in maintaining the church building.
4. Funds raised from the sale of the church property will provide support for other dimensions of the Church's pastoral ministry and mission, particularly the perpetual care of St. Mary's Cemetery.

Accordingly, in virtue of the prescription of canon 1222, §2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, having consulted the Presbyteral Council on May 10, 2022, having judged that sufficient grave causes are present, having determined that the good of souls will suffer no detriment

and that the intentions of donors and any other acquired rights have been examined and given due consideration, I hereby decree that

**ST. MARY CHURCH OF HOUSTON, MINNESOTA
BE RELEGATED TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE.**

This decree becomes effective May 31, 2022. A copy of this decree is to be sent to the pastor of St. Joseph Parish and its contents are to be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, May 14, 2022, and Sunday, May 15, 2022. Furthermore, this decree is to be published on the diocesan website. Any legitimate party, considering himself aggrieved by this decree, retains the right to request emendation or revocation within ten (10) useful days (c. 1734, §§1, 2).

Given in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester on this twelfth day of May in the year of Our Lord 2022.

+John M. Quinn

The Most Reverend John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona-Rochester

Andrew D. Brannon

Vice Chancellor

SEAL