

DAVID ALLEN ZUBIK



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF PITTSBURGH
DECREE

CLOSING FOR WORSHIP OF SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH BUILDING,
MCKEESPORT, PENNSYLVANIA
AND THE REDUCTION OF THE SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH
BUILDING OF SAINT MARK PARISH
TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE.

Whereas, Saint Joseph church located at 1125 Romine Avenue, McKeesport, Pennsylvania, church of the former Saint Joseph Parish, became part of the patrimony of the newly formed Saint Mark Parish with a decree issued on August 6, 1993 and effective on October 9, 1993, in accord with the norm of canon 122 §2.

Whereas, Saint Mark Parish was formed by the extinctive union of Saint Eugene Parish and Saint Joseph Parish.

Whereas, the parish of Saint Mark is facing critical financial difficulties that include its inability to meet its necessary monthly operating expenses using its operating income.

Whereas, the physical condition and maintenance of parish owned buildings, including church buildings, has become a grave threat to the very existence of the parish.

Whereas the Saint Joseph Church Building was subject to a notice of violation issued by the Pennsylvania State Department of Labor & Industry determining that the building's boiler was inoperable and requires replacement, at an estimated cost of \$38,850.00, which the parish cannot afford.

Whereas the roof of Saint Joseph Church is leaking in multiple locations causing damage to the interior ceiling, requiring the replacement of the entire roof at an estimated cost of \$187,000.00, which the parish cannot afford.

Whereas 30% of the over 800 individual windowpanes in the building require replacement due to the damage, shifting, and corrosion of their window frames at an estimated cost of \$194,096.53, which the parish cannot afford.

Whereas any attempt to renovate or repair the church building will carry with it unknown health concerns, including possible asbestos in and under the floor tiles, roof, boiler room, and window glazing, as well as possible mold from water damage in the walls, ceiling, roof, and under the carpets, the cost of addressing these concerns being unknown.

Whereas, a parish assembly was held on Sunday, August 18, 2019, to receive parishioner input regarding the possible closure of the church building and, at this event, parishioners requested the closure of the building so that it would not be a blight on the surrounding community.

Whereas, on January 6, 2020, the Pastor of Saint Mark Parish, with the recommendation of his parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, submitted a petition recommending the relegation to profane but not sordid use of Saint Joseph church building in McKeesport, Pennsylvania.

Whereas, the care of souls will be provided for at Saint Eugene church building, McKeesport, Pennsylvania – located within three (3) miles of Saint Joseph Church.

Whereas, the rationale for the closing Saint Joseph church building for divine worship include the following: (1) the critical financial situation of the parish, including the parish's inability to meet its monthly operating costs; (2) the grave need to reduce costs for the financial viability of the parish; (3) the required maintenance that this church building currently needs, the cost of which is beyond the ability of the parish to afford; (4) there is no other viable source of income to maintain the church; (5) the care of souls will not be greatly impacted because of the availability of another church owned by the parish.

Therefore, having heard the Presbyteral Council on January 28, 2020 and the Vicars General on the same day and having received a unanimous favorable recommendation from both and in accord with the provisions of canon 1222 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby close for worship Saint Joseph church building located at 1125 Romine Avenue, McKeesport, Pennsylvania and furthermore relegate to profane but not sordid use the same church building in accord with the norms of law.

In accordance with our diocesan norms, I also decree that the stained glass windows, sacred items, non-sacred artifacts and any work of some significance be removed to the extent possible for reuse in other sacred edifices in the parish or be transmitted to the Diocesan Archives for use by other ecclesiastical entities. This decree is effective at 12:01AM on Monday, March 23, 2020.

Finally, those who have the right, may appeal this decree in accordance with the prescriptions of the law.

Given at Pittsburgh this 21st day of February in the Year of Our Lord 2020.

+ David A. Zubik
Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

Ellen Mady
Ellen M. Mady
Chancellor

