

DAVID ALLEN ZUBIK



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

CLOSING FOR WORSHIP OF THE
SAINT THOMAS CHURCH BUILDING,
CLARKSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA
AND THE REDUCTION OF THE SAINT THOMAS CHURCH
BUILDING OF SAINT MATTHIAS PARISH
TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE.

Whereas, Saint Thomas church building located at 30 Main Street, Clarksville, Pennsylvania, parish church of the former Saint Thomas Parish, has become part of the patrimony of the newly established Saint Matthias Parish.

Whereas, Saint Thomas Parish established in 1947, merged with Saint Ann Parish, Saint Hugh Parish, Saint Ignatius of Antioch Parish and Our Lady of Consolation Parish, becoming part of the newly formed Saint Matthias Parish on July 1, 2019.

Whereas, the Saint Thomas church building is in need of serious repairs, including but not limited to significant repair to the roof and ceiling of the church, which has collapsed above the sanctuary of the church, as well as mold issues in the church, these repairs would require substantial funding.

Whereas, at the time of the merger, four (4) out of the five (5) of the former parishes that came together to form Saint Matthias Parish were operating at a deficit, and all five (5) of the former parishes had varying amounts of debt that were assumed by the newly formed Saint Matthias Parish.

Whereas Saint Matthias Parish is facing critical financial difficulties that include operating at or near a deficit, owing a sum of over \$100,000 in debt, and foreseeably has an operating budget that exceeds its normal operating income. The Parish has neither the assets, nor the operating income, nor sources of alternative funding with which to make the repairs needed to the Saint Thomas church building or maintain it in the future, the physical condition and needed maintenance of the Saint Thomas church building is a grave threat to the very existence of Saint Matthias Parish.

Whereas, after determining that the newly formed Saint Matthias Parish would be unable to secure funds to begin the maintenance needed for the Saint Thomas church building, or to financially sustain its upkeep in the future, parish Pastoral and Finance Councils of Saint Thomas Parish were consulted, and an assembly with all parishioners was held on March 2, 2019 and March 3, 2019 to inform parishioners about the petition to merge parishes and to receive input regarding the possibility of petitioning to relegate the Saint Thomas church building to profane but not sordid use.

Whereas, on July 2, 2019, the Pastor of Saint Matthias Parish, with the recommendation of the Saint Matthias Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, submitted a petition for the relegation to profane but not sordid use of the Saint Thomas church building in Clarksville, Pennsylvania.

Whereas, the care of souls will be provided for through the use of the St. Marcellus church building and other nearby church buildings in Saint Matthias Parish.

Whereas, the rationale for the closing the Saint Thomas church building for divine worship include the following: (1) the critical financial situation of the parish, including deficit spending and the debt owed by the parish; (2) the grave need to reduce costs for the financial viability of the parish; (3) the required repairs that this church building needs in order to be suitable for sacred worship; (4) there is no other viable source of income to maintain the church; and (5) the care of souls will not be greatly impacted because of the availability of the other nearby churches owned by the parish.


Therefore, having heard the Priest Council on July 16, 2019 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 Thomas church building located at 30 Main Street, Clarksville, 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 September 1, 2019.

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

Given at Pittsburgh this 2nd day of August in the Year of Our Lord 2019.


Very Reverend Thomas W. Kunz
Vice-Chancellor


Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh