



Prot. N. 2020 RPU-2

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Over the past several decades, many things have changed in this particular church. Changing demographics have affected the size and wealth of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the vitality of her parishes. This is particularly true in the City of Chicago itself, where the total population has decreased by 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,736,000 today.

Many of our parishes have received generous financial subsidies from the people of the archdiocese. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2019 these subsidies amounted to \$160,014,332.00, including \$40,039,909.00 to 115 parishes, and \$119,974,423.00 to 93 Catholic schools. Last year alone, the archdiocese provided \$4,448,745.00 to parishes and \$13,511,371.00 to Catholic schools. Little of this money is expected to be recovered, and the generous population of the Archdiocese of Chicago cannot continue this level of financial support while the overall population decreases and the number of Catholic faithful regularly attending Mass declines. Our hope is that our parishes will be more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. To achieve this hope, the parishes must be able to support their churches and ministries when possible.

Following consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, my decree of March 8, 2019, effected the extinction of the separate juridic persons St. Domitilla Parish, Hillside, Illinois, and the neighboring St. Simeon Parish, Bellwood, Illinois. They were united on July 1, 2019, in one new parish with the name of Queen of All Nations Parish.

The Catholic population of the parish has decreased significantly since 1990. This is indicated by the continuous decline in Mass attendance at St. Simeon Church, 49% since the year 2000: 612 to 312. The new parish church of St. Domitilla, Hillside, is 1.6 miles from St. Simeon Church. It seats 900, more than is needed to accommodate the approximately 1,200 regularly attending Sunday Mass in the parish.

In holding the assets and liabilities of the two united parishes, Queen of All Nations Parish has been unduly burdened with buildings and costs it does not need and cannot reasonably use or afford. Notable is the ordinary maintenance and other expenses associated with the ownership and use of St. Simeon Church. The church was in regular use until the First Sunday of Advent 2019, when the parochial community determined to celebrate the regular parish Masses and other liturgies at St. Domitilla Church.

Apart from maintenance and operating expenses, declining use, and no income being now generated at St. Simeon Church, it must also be noted that the church campus has no full-time personnel on site. For most of the week the church campus has become an almost

abandoned site that may threaten the integrity of the buildings and the health and safety of area residents. Additional measures to further secure the buildings are costly and would divert resources away from the parish's work of evangelization and charity.

It is both unrealistic and uncharitable to expect the new parish to support and maintain a church and other structures it cannot use and has no use for. Simply, there are no parochial, archdiocesan, or other ecclesiastical funds available to keep and maintain St. Simeon Church in Bellwood as a place of Catholic worship. The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to relegate the church to profane but not sordid use (*CIC*, c. 1222 §2), allowing it and the rest of the church campus to be sold or otherwise developed for the benefit of the new parish. This would result in an immediate annual savings of at least \$70,000.00 in maintenance and operating costs.

The law requires a grave cause or causes to justify the relegation of a church to profane but not sordid use. The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura held a grave cause was entirely apparent when these factors were present: (1) a financial burden in preserving a church imposed on a parish from the union of several parishes; (2) a church no longer of service to the pastoral care of the faithful due to changed circumstances; (3) a new parish burdened from the beginning by a huge debt; (4) ready and effective assistance available to the new parish from the sale of a church; (5) a diminishing number of faithful whose donations principally sustain the new parish; and (6) charity and other assistance to the poor being neglected to preserve a sacred building (*Ministerium Iustitiae: Jurisprudence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura*, Montreal: W & L (2011): Prot. N. 24388/93 CA, pp. 526-527). St. Simeon Church already entails most of these factors. If the church is not relegated to profane but not sordid use and sold for the benefit of the new parish, the situation will entail all these factors and more. Moreover, there is no governmental support for building or maintaining churches in the USA.

Relegation of St. Simeon Church to profane but not sordid use, according to canon 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, enhances the possibility that the church and other real property assets of the former St. Simeon Parish would become a source of income for the new Queen of All Nations Parish, its parishioners, and its missions

The Reverend Julio Lam, pastor of Queen of All Nations Parish, supports the need and desire to relegate St. Simeon Church in Bellwood to profane but not sordid use and, with the *major et sanior pars* of the parishioners, desires to see the parish community move forward without the financial and other burdens of owning and caring for the church.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to canons 50 & 51, 127 §§1 & 3, 166, and 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on November 5, 2019, at St. Monica Parish, Chicago, and on January 27-28, 2020, at Mundelein Seminary, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois. Having heard the Council's deliberations and vote of 33 for and 0 against a proposal to relegate St. Simeon Church, 430 Bohland Avenue, Bellwood, Illinois 60104-1400, to profane but not sordid use, and after invoking the Holy Spirit and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, I now

decree the following:

1. Effective immediately, St. Simeon Church, Bellwood, a church of Queen of All Nations Parish, in Bellwood and Hillside, Illinois, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;

2. Officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago, cooperating with the Pastor of Queen of All Nations Parish, will make certain the assets of the former St. Simeon Parish, including St. Simeon Church are secure for the benefit of Queen of All Nations Parish;

3. The real property assets of the former St. Simeon Parish are to provide Queen of All Nations Parish with proceeds from the alienation of the property or income from rental under lease;

4. The reports given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the meetings on November 5, 2019, and January 27-28, 2020, are to be attached to this decree and will be available upon request; and


5. Notification of this decree is to be given to the Pastor of Queen of All Nations Parish in Bellwood and Hillside, Illinois, and to the parishioners of the parish through publication on the website of the Archdiocese of Chicago and in the parish bulletin.

Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, signed, and dated petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).

Given this 10th day of March, A.D. 2020.
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

WHEN AVAILABLE, DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2019, AND
JANUARY 27-28, 2020, COUNCIL MEETINGS MAY BE REQUESTED FROM
THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS