



Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Archbishop
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

DECREE

OF THE RELEGATION OF

SAINT AUGUSTINE CHURCH, BRIDGEPORT, PENNSYLVANIA,

TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

Saint Augustine Church, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania served as a worship site of Sacred Heart Parish from July 2014 until December 2015. Over the last year, however, problems with mold and other safety issues have prevented the use of the church for worship in any capacity. The church is no longer needed by the parish, and it is foreseen that the costs of repairing and maintaining Saint Augustine Church would significantly impede the ministry of Sacred Heart Parish. Consideration, therefore, must be given as to whether sufficient grave causes exist for the relegation of Saint Augustine Church to profane but not sordid use.

The following grave causes suggest that Saint Augustine Church be so relegated and no longer be used for divine worship:

- 1) Saint Augustine Church is no longer needed by Sacred Heart Parish. On July 1, 2014, Saint Augustine Parish, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania merged with Sacred Heart Parish, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania. Originally Saint Augustine Church and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church served as worship sites for Sacred Heart Parish, but beginning in January 2015, Sunday Masses were discontinued at both worship sites. In December 2015, funerals were discontinued at Saint Augustine Church, and no divine worship of any kind has taken place at Saint Augustine Church since that time. In addition, Saint Augustine Church is located in close proximity to Sacred Heart Church. There does not exist an undue burden for the faithful to come to Sacred Heart Church to worship;
- 2) The decision to seek relegation of Saint Augustine Church to profane but not sordid use was made known to the parish community at-large and no major objections emerged;
- 3) The property on which Saint Augustine Church sits, however, also includes two parking lots, a rectory, a school and a convent, all of which are vacant, causing deteriorating conditions to all of these properties. Sacred Heart Parish may wish to sell the property on which Saint Augustine Church is located, as it is foreseen that the sale of this entire property will best enhance the future economic condition of the parish. It is also foreseen, however, that potential buyers will only be interested if the entire property on which Saint Augustine Church is located is made available for sale;

- 4) Sacred Heart Parish has endeavored to maintain Saint Augustine Church in good repair. Saint Augustine Church has been found, however, to contain mold contamination throughout the entire building, much of it concentrated on the walls of the sanctuary and sacristies. The estimated cost of making these and other repairs to the church building would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. While Sacred Heart Parish has some financial reserves, the recently merged Sacred Heart Parish experienced an operating deficit of almost \$300,000 in its first fiscal year of existence and just under \$200,000 in its second fiscal year of existence. Continuing to sustain these yearly operating deficits in addition to incurring the significant estimated costs of maintaining and repairing Saint Augustine Church would be seen as a serious misuse of Sacred Heart Parish's financial resources. There exists no other significant source of funding for the costs of repairing and maintaining Saint Augustine Church;
- 5) The Saint Augustine Church building does not have any particular architectural, historical or artistic significance; and,
- 6) Having all of the parishioners worship at Sacred Heart Church will continue to enhance parish unity and help parishioners focus on the future of the parish.

Accordingly, in virtue of the precepts of canon 1212 and canon 1222, §2 of the Code of Canon Law, having judged that sufficient grave causes are present and that the good of souls will not thereby be impaired, and having consulted with the Council of Priests on October 17, 2016, I hereby **DECREE** that Saint Augustine Church, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania, be relegated to profane but not sordid use.

This decree is effective as of January 11, 2017 and is to be communicated to the members of Sacred Heart Parish and to the faithful of the Archdiocese in an appropriate manner. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Curia of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, on the 7th day of December, in the Year of Our Lord 2016.



Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Philadelphia

SEAL



Reverend Sean P. Bransfield
Vice-Chancellor