

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

DECREE

OF THE RELEGATION OF

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has been designated as a church for worship by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania since July 2016. Our Lady Help of Christians Church is no longer needed by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, and it is believed that the continued costs of maintaining and repairing Our Lady Help of Christians Church would significantly prevent and weaken the financial stability of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. Consideration, therefore, must be given as to whether sufficient grave causes exist for the relegation of Our Lady Help of Christians Church to profane but not sordid use.

The following grave causes suggest that Our Lady Help of Christians Church be so relegated and no longer be used for divine worship:

- 1) Our Lady Help of Christians Church is no longer needed by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. On July 1, 2016, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania merged with Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Since the time of the merger in 2016, Our Lady Help of Christians Church has been used for the celebration of two funeral Masses and no weddings, but the last funeral to be celebrated at Our Lady Help of Christians Church was in the early fall of 2016, and no other acts of divine worship have been celebrated there since that time. The primary reason for this fact is because in early 2017, following a mandated facade inspection, the church was deemed to be unsafe. In addition, the interior of the church has fallen into disrepair primarily due to exterior water damage that has affected the windows and walls of the church. Also, the church basement has sustained significant mold damage due to the effects of moisture. The one remaining boiler that services the church, school and convent properties of the former Our Lady Help of Christians Parish is old and in need of constant maintenance. All of these conditions have made it financially difficult for Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish to physically maintain the buildings that formerly constituted the physical properties of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish;

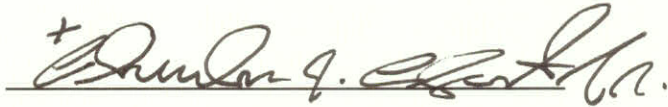
- 2) Our Lady Help of Christians Church is located in close proximity to Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church. There does not exist an undue burden for the faithful to come to Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church to worship;
- 3) The decision to seek relegation of Our Lady Help of Christians Church to profane but not sordid use was made known to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish community at-large and no major objections emerged;
- 4) Besides the church building of Our Lady Help of Christians Church, there are other real estate properties and physical assets located on the property that was formerly owned by Our Lady Help of Christians Parish. These buildings and properties in addition to the church include a school, convent, rectory, detached garage, parking lot and land surrounding the rectory. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish may wish to sell the entire property on which Our Lady Help of Christians Church is located, as it is foreseen that the sale of this entire property would help relieve the significant financial difficulties that Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish is now experiencing;
- 5) Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish has striven to maintain Our Lady Help of Christians Church in good repair. However, the costs of maintaining the church and properties of the former Our Lady Help of Christians Parish have placed a significant financial strain upon Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. During the first half of the calendar year 2017, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish was required to spend in excess of \$100,000 for restoration work of Our Lady Help of Christians Church. Furthermore, during the 2017 fiscal year, the total deficits incurred by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish for the properties formerly owned by Our Lady Help of Christians Parish exceeded \$140,000, and as of March 2018, the deficit amount incurred for the 2018 fiscal year had already exceeded \$20,000. In addition to the restoration work done for Our Lady Help of Christians Church paid by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish that exceeded \$100,000, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish experienced an operating deficit of over \$85,000 during the 2017 fiscal year, and the parish has budgeted an operating deficit of \$76,000 for the 2018 fiscal year. It also must be noted that as of the end of February 2018, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish maintained a debt exceeding \$2,600,000. Because of the significant financial burdens currently being experienced by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish as well as the fact that Our Lady Help of Christians Church is no longer needed by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, it is believed that the possible eventual sale of the properties formerly owned by Our Lady Help of Christians Parish would be best for the current and future vitality of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish;
- 6) The Our Lady Help of Christians Church building does not have any particular architectural, historical or artistic significance; and,
- 7) Having all of the parishioners continue to worship at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church will continue to enhance parish unity and help parishioners focus on the future of the parish.

Accordingly, in virtue of the prescripts 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 March 16, 2018, I hereby **DECREE** that Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, be relegated to profane but not sordid use.

This Decree is effective as of June 4, 2018 and is to be communicated to the members of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish and to the faithful of the Archdiocese in an appropriate manner. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

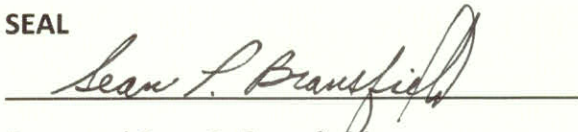
Given at the Curia of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, on the 26th day of April, in the Year of Our Lord 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charles J. Chaput", written over a horizontal line. A small cross symbol is positioned above the first letter of the first name.

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

Archbishop of Philadelphia

SEAL

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean P. Bransfield", written over a horizontal line.

Reverend Sean P. Bransfield

Vice-Chancellor