

## ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

# DECREE

## OF THE RELEGATION OF THE ORIGINAL SAINT PHILIP NERI CHURCH, EAST GREENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

The original Saint Philip Neri Church, East Greenville, Pennsylvania was built in 1919 to serve as the parish church of the newly founded Saint Philip Neri Parish, and the church was replaced in 1968 to accommodate the growing parish by a new parish church built in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania with the same name. The current parish church is located two miles away from the original parish church. The original parish church has not been used for sacred worship since 1968. In addition to the original parish church no longer being used for worship, the original parish campus, located in East Greenville, includes the former parish rectory, the former parish convent and the former parish school building, all of which are now empty and unused. The ongoing costs of maintaining the original parish church building as well as the entire East Greenville campus would continue to negatively impact the financial state of the parish and thus impact the overall future ministry efforts of the parish. Consideration, therefore, must be given as to whether sufficient grave causes exist for the relegation of the original parish church of Saint Philip Neri Parish, Pennsburg, to profane but not sordid use.

The following grave causes suggest that the original Saint Philip Neri Church, East Greenville, be so relegated and no longer be used for divine worship:

- 1) The original church has not been used for divine worship of any kind since 1968, when the new parish church in Pennsburg was built. Shortly after the new church was built, the original parish church building was converted into a hall and cafeteria for the parish school. In 2012 the parish school closed, and after that point the building was used in a very infrequent manner as a parish hall for limited events. Since the heating system in the original church ceased functioning in 2019, the building has not been used for any purpose. In addition, the current church building used for divine worship by the parish since 1968 is located only two miles from the original church, and since the time the new church was built, there has not existed a burden for the faithful to come to the present parish church building to worship. No situation in the parish has arisen during the intervening fifty-four year period that would have required the use of this church;

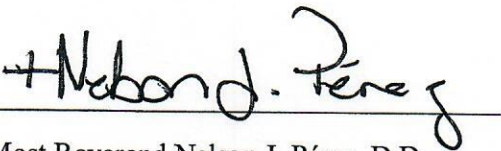


- 2) The decision to seek relegation of the original parish church to profane but not sordid use was made known to the parish community at-large and no major objections emerged;
- 3) The continued costs of maintaining the East Greenville campus buildings detract from the overall parish mission. The original church building has not been used as a church since 1968, the rectory has not been used since 1989, the convent has not been inhabited since 1992 and the school building has not functioned as a school since 2012. The continued costs of maintaining these buildings would serve as a financial burden on the parish. Furthermore, while Saint Philip Neri Parish enjoyed an operating surplus during the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year, and while the parish does possess financial reserves, it also has debt which it is looking to reduce. In addition, the current parish church needs a new heating and air conditioning system as well as a new parking lot. It is also to be noted that the parish currently spends over \$20,000 per year in routine maintenance and upkeep costs associated with the East Greenville campus buildings. A possible future sale of the entire East Greenville campus would help alleviate the financial burdens currently being experienced by the parish;
- 4) The original parish church building does not have any particular architectural, historical or artistic significance; and,
- 5) Having all of the parishioners continue to worship at the current parish church will 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 September 8, 2022, I hereby **DECREE** that the original Saint Philip Neri Church, East Greenville, Pennsylvania, be relegated to profane but not sordid use.

This decree is effective as of January 23, 2023 and is to be communicated to the members of Saint Philip Neri Parish and to the faithful of the Archdiocese in an appropriate manner. Recourse may be taken against this decree in accord with the norms of canon law. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

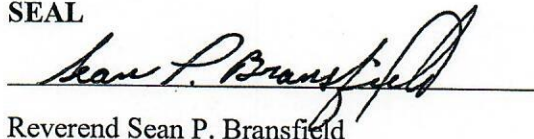
Given at the Curia of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of December, in the Year of Our Lord 2022.



Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.

Archbishop of Philadelphia

SEAL



Reverend Sean P. Bransfield

Chancellor