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# DECREE

## RELEGATING

### HOLY NAME CHURCH CINCINNATI, OHIO

#### TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

In 1904 a Catholic parish was established for the faithful of the Mount Auburn neighborhood of Cincinnati. At first the community gathered to worship in a large family home. In 1906 construction began on the first church which was also combined with a school. The community worshipped in this sacred space for over four decades. In 1950, to accommodate the growth of the community, construction of a new church began. This is the current church which was consecrated in 1951. From 1968 to 1990, the pastoral care of the parish was entrusted to the Society of the Precious Blood. From 2002 to 2020, the Order of Friars Minor ministered to the faithful of Holy Name Parish.

Attendance at Sunday Mass reached its peak of approximately 260 in the 1970's and early 1980s. Since that time, the number of parishioners has generally decreased; the average across the 1980's was approximately 204; across the 1990's, approximately 117; across the 2000's, approximately 115; across the 2010's, approximately 70; and for the last ten years, approximately 50.

Beginning in 2021 a common pastor served the three parishes of Holy Name, Saint Monica – Saint George, and Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From this time, the parishioners of all four parishes began to work together to fulfill the mandate of the Lord to go out and make disciples of all.

After many discussions had taken place between the pastor, the other clergy and lay staff serving the parishes, the parishioners, and the appropriate archdiocesan offices regarding the best way to meet the needs of the faithful and evangelize in accordance with the mandate of the Lord Jesus, it has been decided to amalgamate Holy Name Parish and Saint Monica – Saint George Parish into Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish by an extinctive union. This decision has been promulgated by a separate decree.

After careful study and deliberation of the facts, the pastor of Holy Name, Saint Monica – Saint George, and Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes, having heard the members of the pastoral council and finance council for the parishes, has proposed to relegate Holy Name Church to profane but not sordid use. I have determined that sufficient grave cause exists to relegate Holy Name Church to profane but not sordid use.

The following factors contribute to the grave cause which motivates this decision:

- 1) because of falling parishioner base, it is difficult for those who remain to maintain and care for the building;
- 2) deferred maintenance issues are accumulating (water damage, boiler maintenance, tuckpointing, overgrowth of wooded areas, eroding concrete steps, plumbing issues, asbestos in need of removal, etc.).

and there are currently insufficient financial resources available to address these issues, despite efforts to increase weekly offerings;

- 3) the limited resources of the parish create a sacramental burden for priests and a ministerial burden for regional staff, who are also tasked with the pastoral care of two other parishes and churches;
- 4) there are many Catholic churches in the area a meet the spiritual needs of the faithful:
  - a. 2.0 miles from Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church
  - b. 0.9 miles from Saint Monica Church
  - c. 1.2 miles from Saint Francis Seraph Church
  - d. 3.6 miles from Bellarmine Chapel
  - e. 2.0 miles from Saint Francis de Sales Church
  - f. 1.7 miles from Sacred Heart Church
  - g. 2.4 miles from Saint Francis Xavier Church
  - h. 2.2 miles from Holy Cross – Immaculata Church
  - i. 1.3 miles from Old Saint Mary's Church;
- 5) Holy Name Parish has previously alienated property on its campus to try to cover the loss of financial resources, yet revenues and savings continue to diminish, despite shared costs being absorbed in many cases by neighboring parishes;
- 6) current and previous pastors have attempted to curtail the parishioner and income loss over recent years but have been unable to maintain the property suitably during this time, and funds are forecasted to be exhausted by the end of the current fiscal; the parish risks the ability to pay for insurance and utility costs necessary to safely keep the campus accessible;
- 7) other options have been explored to fund the continued use of the church building, but none have the potential to provide for both building maintenance and ministerial presence;
- 8) the parish community has reached a point where it is not able to respond with adequate proposals to meet even basic maintenance needs;
- 9) the church is not necessary for accommodating the number of Catholic worshippers in the area
  - a. estimated capacity of the other churches under the care of the pastor totals 650
  - b. Holy Name Church estimated capacity is 200
  - c. average total attendance across all Sunday Masses in the neighboring churches is approximately 798
  - d. total capacity for worshippers in these churches based on Sunday Mass Schedule is 1,450;
- 10) the cost of maintaining the physical property of Holy Name Church is unduly burdensome
  - a. costs of maintaining Saint Monica Church, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, and Holy Name Church exceed the financial capabilities of these parishes combined; and
- 11) continued decrease in attendance at Mass and participation in the sacraments
  - a. average Sunday Mass attendance had decreased over 50% between 2000 and 2025;
  - b. number of infant baptisms, confirmations, and first communions has decreased steadily over the last several years.

Taking into account the supreme law of the Church, i.e. the salvation of souls (cf. canon 1752), it is my belief that this action will better serve the Church's mission to evangelize and allow for more efficient administration of the temporal goods of the faithful, while continuing to meet their spiritual needs.

Therefore, in virtue of my office as diocesan bishop, in accordance with canon 1212 and canon 1222 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, having consulted with the Presbyteral Council on December 15, 2025, and having verified that there are none who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church or the adjacent property, I hereby decree that Holy Name Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, be relegated to profane but not sordid use.

This decree becomes effective as of March 25, 2026, and is to be published immediately such that all members of Holy Name Parish, Saint Monica – Saint George Parish, and Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish will be properly notified. Recourse may be made against this decree in accord with the norms of canon law.

Given from the Chancery of the Archdiocese,  
Cincinnati, Ohio,  
on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of December in the year of our Lord 2025,  
Friday of the Third Week of Advent.

*+Robert S. Casey*

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Most Reverend Robert G. Casey  
Archbishop of Cincinnati

SEAL

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*Rev. Jason A. Williams*  
Reverend Jason A. Williams, J.C.L.  
Chancellor