DECREE

RELEGATING

SAINT MARGARET OF CORTONA CHURCH
CINCINNATI, OHIO

TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

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

The Catholic faithful in the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Madisonville, Fairfax, Madison Place, Mariemont, and Linwood have been members of various parishes over the years. Saint Anthony Parish was organized in Madisonville in 1858, and its present church was completed in October 1891. Our Lady of Loretto Parish was founded in Linwood in 1903; at that time the Linwood Town Hall was converted into the parish church. Saint Margaret of Cortona Parish was founded on the border of Fairfax and Madisonville in 1921, with the current church building being completed in September of the same year. In 1949 Saint John Vianney Parish was founded in Madison Place, and Saint John Vianney Church was completed in 1950.

By the end of the 20th century, it was becoming apparent that four parishes and churches were no longer necessary to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful in this part of Cincinnati. Our Lady of Loretto Parish was amalgamated into Saint Margaret of Cortona Parish, and Our Lady of Loretto Church was subsequently sold. Only 13 years later, Saint Margaret of Corona Parish was merged with Saint John Vianney Parish to form Saint Margaret-Saint John Parish in 2008. Saint John Vianney Church was sold, and the community of the Catholic faithful worshipped together at Saint Margaret of Cortona Church.

Beginning in 2010 a single pastor served both Saint Margaret-Saint John Parish and Saint Anthony Parish, uniting the Catholic faithful in this area under his spiritual guidance. With continued changes in personnel and pastoral circumstances, a single priest was appointed in 2016 to serve as pastor of Saint Margaret-Saint John Parish, Saint Anthony Parish, and Saint Cecilia Parish, Oakley. From this time, the parishioners of all three 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 by an extinctive union Saint Margaret-Saint John Parish and Saint Anthony Parish into Saint Cecilia Parish. This decision has been promulgated by a separate decree.

After careful study and deliberation of the facts, the pastor of Saint Anthony, Saint Margaret–Saint John, and Saint Cecilia Parishes, with the recommendation of the members of the pastoral council and finance council of all three parishes, has proposed to relegate Saint Margaret of Cortona Church to profane but not sordid use. I have determined that sufficient grave cause exists to relegate Saint Margaret of Cortona Church to profane but not sordid use.

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

1) the church is no longer necessary for accommodating the number of Catholic worshippers in the area
   a. estimated capacity of the nearby churches is 1,750
   b. Saint Margaret of Cortona Church estimated capacity is 510
   c. average attendance across all Masses in the neighboring churches is approximately 2,100
   d. total capacity for worshippers in these parishes based on Sunday Mass Schedule is 4,650

2) the cost of necessary repairs and improvements to the church poses a significant burden to the financial capabilities of the parish
   a. estimated cost to add a restroom on the level of the church and to make needed repairs to the church roof is in excess of $750,000
   b. other major deferred maintenance issues: the HVAC system and boiler severely out of date and are currently being maintained with piecemeal, minimal repairs; asbestos tiles in various places throughout the church and attached school building should be removed if the facility were to be upgraded to current standards
   c. facility requires major upgrades for accessibility and handicapped access
   d. many other repairs, though individually less costly in nature, would in the aggregate constitute a greater financial burden on the parish

3) continued decrease in attendance at Mass and participation in the sacraments
   a. average Mass attendance has decreased over 25% in the past decade
   b. Catholic population in the area is projected to decrease to 11.6% by 2030

4) the Archdiocese is in the process of the Beacons of Light pastoral planning initiative which aims to reallocate resources from maintenance to mission

5) proximity to other Catholic churches ensures that the spiritual needs of the local faithful can continue to be met
   a. 1.3 miles from Saint Anthony Church
   b. 3.1 miles from Saint Mary Church
   c. 2.4 miles from Saint Cecilia Church

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 the spiritual needs of the faithful.

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 March 27, 2023, and having verified that there are none who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church or the adjacent property, I hereby decree that Saint Margaret of Cortona Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, be relegated to profane but not sordid use.

This decree becomes effective as of July 1, 2023, and is to be published immediately such that all members of Saint Anthony Parish, Saint Margaret–Saint John Parish, and Saint Cecilia Parish will be properly notified.

Given from the Chancery of the Archdiocese,
Cincinnati, Ohio,
on the 8th day of May in the Year of Our Lord 2023.

Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

SEAL

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