



**Decree of the Relegation of  
Notre Dame Church in Fall River, Massachusetts,  
to Profane but not Sordid Use**

**Whereas** the Parish of St. Bernadette, Fall River, Massachusetts, was suppressed effective the fifth day of August in the year two thousand eighteen; and

**Whereas** the deteriorating and dangerous condition of Notre Dame Church, is known; and

**Whereas** all the consultations and requirements mandated by Canon 1222, §2 have been duly accomplished; and

**Whereas** no party has presented any lawful claim to the real estate of the former Parish of Saint Bernadette; and

**Whereas**, the following grave causes suggest that the Notre Dame Church be relegated to profane but not sordid use and can no longer be used for divine worship:

- (1) Notre Dame Church is in need of extensive and urgent repairs to make it a safe site for parishioners to gather for worship.
- (2) The Diocese of Fall River does not have the resources to repair and maintain this church building.
- (3) The financial burden of repairing and maintaining the Notre Dame Church would cause important pastoral programs of the Diocese suffer due to lack of funding and negatively impact the pastoral work of the Diocese.
- (4) The Notre Dame Church building does not have any particular historical significance.
- (5) There are enough Churches in the area to adequately serve the foreseeable needs of parishioners.

**Therefore**, in virtue of the provisions of Canons 1212 and 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 Presbyteral Council on March 18, 2019, I hereby DECREE that Notre Dame Church in Fall River, Massachusetts, be hereby relegated to profane but not sordid use.

**Further**, I hereby decree that any sacred furnishings and artifacts be disposed of in a manner befitting their character and the known intentions of any donor.

**Further**, in addition to the usual requirements of Church law (Canons 1290-1298) for the valid and licit alienation or permanent modification of Notre Dame Church in Fall River or any part thereof, any such alienation or modification is subject to my approval as being consonant with the requirements of Canon 1222, §2.

**This decree** takes effect at 11:59 PM on Sunday, March 24, 2019, and is to be communicated to the members of Saint Bernadette Parish and to the faithful of the Diocese in an appropriate manner.

**In the event** that anyone with canonical standing feels injured by the provisions of this Decree, he or she may initiate a hierarchical recourse against this Decree according to the provisions of Canon 1732-1739 within ten useful days.

**Given** at the Curia of the Diocese of Fall River on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March in the year two thousand nineteen.

Attest

*Kevin R. Heley*  
Chancellor

*+Edgar M. da Cunha*  
Most Rev. Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V.  
Bishop of Fall River