



DECREE

St. Mary Parish of Ellsworth, Minnesota, was founded in 1885, serving the faithful of the area for 133 years. In 2011 the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, with the assistance of professional consultants, embarked upon Vision 2016: a comprehensive visioning and planning process aimed at providing opportunities to enhance the pastoral care of the faithful, address shortages in clergy and evaluate current parish structures in light of changing demographic trends. Upon the extensive collaboration of clergy and lay leaders throughout the Diocese, the recommended, and eventual merging (*unio extinctiva*), of St. Mary Parish with St. Catherine Parish, Luverne, Minnesota, becomes effective October 8, 2018.

In a Vision 2016 proposal submitted on March 3, 2016, the parish leadership team recommended that there be no regular Mass at the church building of St. Mary. On March 14, 2018, parishioners of St. Mary conducted a vote on the desired future use of the church building, and the majority voted to sell the building. The basis for the recommendation is that there will no longer be Masses celebrated in the building and that there exists a lack of fiscal and human resources necessary to properly maintain the structure.

The following grave causes suggest that the church building be relegated to profane but not sordid use:

1. That the necessary human and fiscal resources to adequately maintain the structure are no longer available. Hence, maintaining the building as a place of worship would place an excessive burden upon St. Catherine Parish.
2. The people who once attended St. Mary Parish are in close proximity to St. Catherine Parish. Use of the church building for divine worship or any other activity will be infrequent and its sale will promote unity within the parish.
3. Having made public the possibility of the sale or razing of the church building, no member has expressed a legitimate interest in maintaining the church building.
4. Funds raised from the sale of the church property will provide support for other dimensions of the Church's pastoral ministry and mission.

Accordingly, in virtue of the prescription of canon 1222, §2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, having consulted the Presbyteral Council on September 4, 2018, having judged that sufficient grave causes are present, having determined that the good of souls will suffer no detriment

and that the intentions of donors and any other acquired rights have been examined and given due consideration, I hereby decree that

**ST. MARY CHURCH OF ELLSWORTH, MINNESOTA
BE RELEGATED TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE.**

This decree becomes effective October 8, 2018. A copy of this decree is to be sent to the pastor of St. Catherine Parish and its contents are to be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, September 15, 2018, and Sunday, September 16, 2018. Furthermore, this decree is to be published on the diocesan website. Any legitimate party, considering himself aggrieved by this decree, retains the right to request emendation or revocation within ten (10) useful days (c. 1734, §§1, 2).

Given in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester on this sixth day of September in the year of Our Lord 2018.

[Redacted]

The Most Reverend John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona-Rochester

[Redacted]

The Very Reverend Glenn K. Frerichs
Chancellor

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