



## DECREE

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish of Harmony, Minnesota, was founded in 1905, serving the faithful of the area for over 118 years. Upon the extensive collaboration of clergy and lay leaders throughout the Diocese, the recommended, and eventual merging (*unio extinctiva*), of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish with Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Canton, Minnesota, became effective February 4, 2024.

In a letter presented to the Bishop and Presbyteral Council on December 19, 2023, the Pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish offered the following grave causes which suggest that the church building of the former parish of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary be relegated to profane but not sordid use:

1. The necessary human and 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 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish.
2. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary has rapidly declining saving and checking accounts. Moreover, it is abundantly clear that area Catholics are not interested in supporting the building with the necessary financial resources.
3. The people who once attended Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish are in close proximity to several other parishes, including Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. Use of the church building for divine worship or any other activity will be infrequent or nonexistent.
4. 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.
5. Funds raised from the sale of the church property will provide support for other dimensions of the Church's pastoral ministry and mission, particularly the perpetual care of neighboring cemeteries.

Accordingly, in virtue of the prescription of canon 1222, §2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, having consulted the Presbyteral Council on December 19, 2023, 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

**NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PARISH OF HARMONY,  
MINNESOTA  
BE RELEGATED TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE.**

This decree becomes effective March 17, 2024. A copy of this decree is to be sent to the pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish and its contents are to be communicated at all Masses of obligation on the weekend of Saturday, March 2, 2024, and Sunday, March 3, 2024. 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 twenty - eighth day of February in the year of Our Lord 2024.

*+Robert Barron*

The Most Reverend Robert Barron  
Bishop of Winona-Rochester

*Michelle K Gerlach*

Chancellor

