



9.5.2020

Status of Ss. John and Stephen Church in James City changes

Father William O'Brien, pastor of St. Callistus Parish in Kane, announced on September 5 that the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, after consultation with the presbyteral council, has relegated Ss. John and Stephen Church in James City, a secondary church of St. Callistus Parish, to "profane but not sordid use," effective September 13, 2020.

The technical designation refers to the canon law process by which a bishop removes the blessing or consecration of a church building. Through that process, the building ceases to be reserved for divine worship, and therefore, can be used for non-religious purposes. The term "profane" means secular or non-religious, while "sordid" means unbecoming or inappropriate.

The designation is the result of a process that occurs when a pastor, with the support of the parish finance council and the parish pastoral council, believes a church building can no longer be maintained for any of a variety of reasons and petitions the bishop to relegate the church. A complete

- more -

ANNE-MARIE WELSH
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1167
Cell 814.746.6889
amwelsh@ErieRCD.org

MARY SOLBERG
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1171
Cell 814.969.1844
msolberg@ErieRCD.org

history of the church, as well as a detailed narrative of the current situation, is described in the decree announcing the bishop's decision, now available at www.ErieRCD.org/bishop/decrees.html

Built in 1915, Masses were celebrated at Ss. John and Stephen Church on Sundays and Holy Days until 1989. Other than for a short time in 2011 during a temporary period of renovation at St. Callistus, the church has not been in regular use. Even private devotions there have ceased in recent years.

Catholic residents of James City, which is just four miles from Kane, have always been parishioners of St. Callistus Parish.

The pastoral planning process involving parishes that was completed in 2017 was designed to allow parishes to evaluate their own situations going forward, and to make recommendations to the bishop from the local level.

#