



6.17.22

Status of St. John the Evangelist Church in Girard changes

Father Scott Detisch, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Girard, announced on June 11 that the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, after consultation with the presbyteral council, has relegated St. John the Evangelist Church in Girard to “profane but not sordid use,” effective Sunday, July 17, 2022.

The 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.

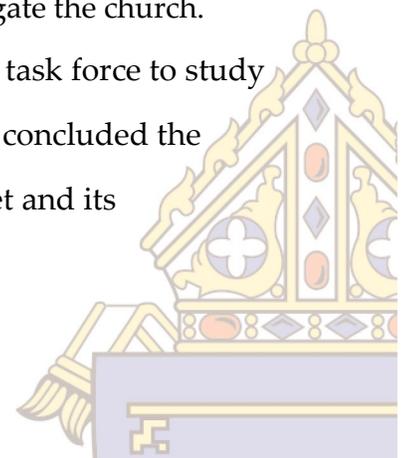
The decision is the result of a process that occurs when a pastor, with the support of the parish finance council and the parish pastoral council, believes a church building can no longer be maintained for any of a variety of reasons and petitions the bishop to relegate the church.

Given that the parish has significant debt, Father Detisch appointed a task force to study the long-term feasibility of parish finances and facilities. The task force concluded the parish could not afford to maintain both its parish center on Main Street and its church and former school building on Olin Avenue.

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A group of professionals, including a real estate appraiser, a civil engineer and a liturgical design consultant, then recommended the parish center become the seat of the parish, i.e., its official address and the location of its office.

Prior to finalizing the decision, parishioners were invited to a set of public meetings. The majority of those in attendance expressed support for the proposed transfer to the parish center, for making permanent the transfer of divine worship from the parish church to the parish center, and for relegating the current church to profane but not sordid use.

The parish center has been used for parish worship in order to comply with COVID restrictions since early 2020. The sacred furnishings from the parish church will be moved to the parish center, with gradual improvements to be made as the parish can afford. Father Detisch therefore requested that the seat of the parish be transferred to the parish center.

A complete 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.

A pastoral planning process involving parishes in the Diocese of Erie was implemented in 2017. After an initial diocesan-wide restructuring, the plan was designed to encourage parishes to evaluate their own situations going forward, and to make recommendations to the bishop from the local level.

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