



NEWS RELEASE

DIOCESE OF ERIE

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Status of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Lewis run changes

Father John Jacquel, pastor of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, Bradford, announced on June 17 that the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, after consultation with the presbyteral council, has relegated Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church in Lewis Run, a secondary church of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, to “profane but not sordid use,” effective July 1, 2023.

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 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.

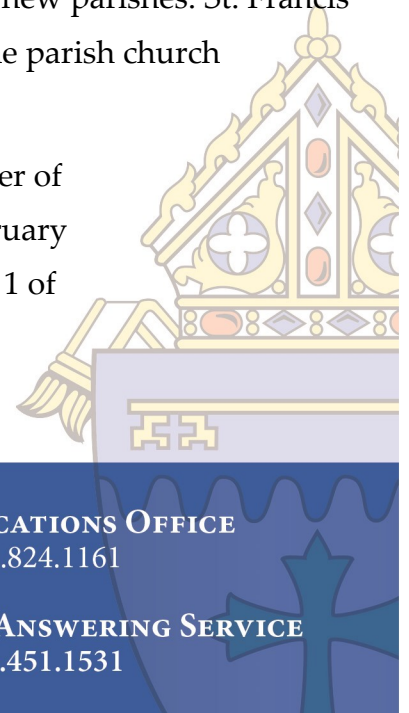
Our Mother of Perpetual Help became a parish in 1946 when Bishop John Mark Gannon split the territory of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, thereby creating two new parishes: St. Francis of Assisi in Bradford and Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Lewis Run. The parish church for Our Mother of Perpetual Help was built in 1951.

As the result of pastoral planning in the Diocese of Erie, Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish was merged into St. Francis of Assisi Parish in February of 2017. Weekend Masses continued to be celebrated there until February 1 of

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this year, when additional planning completed on a regional level merged St. Francis of Assisi Parish back into St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish. At that time, weekend Masses at Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church ceased.

A complete history of the church, as well as a 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 completed 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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