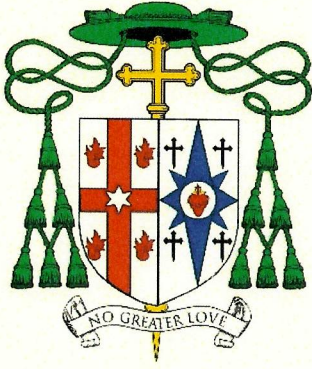




DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

HIS EXCELLENCY
MOST REVEREND ROBERT D. GRUSS
By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

DECREE
THE REDUCTION TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE OF SAINT HYACINTH CHURCH
(Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish) BAY CITY, MICHIGAN

THE FACTS

Whereas, the church of Saint Hyacinth located at 1515 Cass Ave, Bay City, MI 48708 is one of the worship sites of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, and has served the faithful for many years as a place of prayer, worship and sacramental life;

Whereas, The Most Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, then Bishop of Grand Rapids, MI, by written decree dated October 4, 1905, granted permission for the establishment of a new parish, to be named Saint Hyacinth, for the care of the souls among the faithful of Polish descent residing south of 27th Street, Bay City, MI. The first church was solemnly consecrated by Bishop Richter on December 8, 1907;

Whereas, the cornerstone of the current church edifice was laid by the Most Reverend Stephen Woźnicki on October 8, 1950;

Whereas, by decree effective July 2014, the Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw, erected the parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa through the canonical merger of the parishes of Saint Stanislaus Kostka and Saint Hyacinth. Furthermore, Saint Hyacinth was designated as a church for additional use for the pastoral needs of the community;

Whereas, in recent years, the parish has experienced a sustained decline in active membership, resulting in decreased sacramental participation and diminished financial resources;

Whereas, a pastoral and financial review concluded that the continued maintenance and operation of Saint Hyacinth church site is no longer feasible and prudent;

Whereas, the parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa is facing critical financial difficulties that include deficit spending for several years in large part due to trying to maintain two church buildings;

Whereas, the parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa has over \$1.1 million owed in debts and accounts payable;

Whereas, the church buildings of both Saint Hyacinth and Saint Stanislaus Kostka are in challenging condition with masonry and roof sections in need of repair or replacement;

Whereas, required maintenance and repairs for this church building for a new roof alone currently will be, at minimum, estimated at \$ 363,000.00.

THE LAW

Whereas, can. 1212 - Sacred places lose their dedication or blessing if they have been destroyed in large part or have been turned over permanently to profane use by decree of the competent ordinary or in fact.

Whereas, can. 1222 - §1. If a church cannot be used in any way for divine worship and there is no possibility of repairing it, the diocesan bishop can relegate it to profane but not sordid use. §2. Where other grave causes suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship, the diocesan bishop, after having heard the presbyteral council, can relegate it to profane but not sordid use, with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment thereby.

Whereas, canons 515§2 and 87§1 support the diocesan bishop's authority to make decisions regarding parish structures and discipline for the spiritual welfare of the faithful.

THE ARGUMENT

Whereas, the continued sacred designation of Saint Hyacinth is no longer justified given its closure and its non-use for liturgical purposes;

Whereas, the continued use of Saint Hyacinth is no longer justified by the current demographic and financial realities of the parish;

Whereas, the faithful of the parish will not be deprived of access to the sacraments and will be fully integrated into the liturgical and pastoral life of Our Lady of Częstochowa;

Whereas, the Parish has undergone a sustained decline in active membership, resulting in diminished participation and reduced financial capacity;

Whereas, this decline renders the continued operation of the two worship sites unsustainable;

Whereas, responsible stewardship, ecclesial unity, and pastoral effectiveness require the consolidation of parish resources and activity;

Whereas, relegating the building to profane use will allow for proper stewardship of parish assets and prevent the unnecessary expenditure of parish resources on maintaining a building that is no longer necessary for divine worship;

In light of these factors, it is deemed most responsible, both pastorally and financially, to consolidate parish resources and explore viable solutions to ensure the sustainability of the parish and its mission (can. 1222§1);

Wherefore:

1. Having carefully considered the law and the facts; and
2. Having heard the Presbyteral Council on August 27, 2024; and
3. Having heard on June 18, 2024 the Pastor and the Parish Pastoral and Finance Council of Our Lady of Częstochowa Parish, in whose territory the aforesaid property is situated; and
4. Having obtained on October 5, 2024, the consent of those whose rights might be injured or violated, especially the major donors (or: the heirs of the major donor,), in accordance with the norm of canon 1222§2; and
5. Having ensured that the church will be stripped of its altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts; and
6. Having ensured the good of the souls will suffer no harm thereby; that is, the spiritual and pastoral good of the parishioners will continue as it has been provided by Our Lady of Częstochowa at St. Stanislaus Kosta church.
7. Having ensured that there would be no scandal resulting from the relegation of the church to profane but not sordid use.

DECREE

I, the Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss, Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, by the authority granted to me in canon 1222§2, and after consultation with the Presbyteral Council, do hereby pronounce, declare and decree that the church of Saint Hyacinth located at 1515 Cass Ave, Bay City, MI has herewith lost its blessing, dedication, or consecration. It is no longer a place for divine worship. Its altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts are to be removed from the church to the extent possible for reuse in the parish at Saint Stanislaus Kostka church or to be transmitted to the Diocesan Archive for use by other ecclesiastical entities. The church is hereto relegated to profane but not sordid use effective at 12:01AM on May 28, 2025. (can. 1222§2).

Everything I have decreed must be observed in all its parts. Anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention, may not be carried out following the promulgation of this decree, I establish that it be promulgated by way of publication on the website of the Diocese of Saginaw and on the parish website of Our Lady of Częstochowa.

In accordance with canons 1734-1737, any party aggrieved by this decree has the right to petition for its revocation or amendment by hierarchical recourse within ten (10) canonical days of its legitimate notification.

Given on this 2nd day of May in the year of Our Lord 2025, at the chancery of the Diocese of Saginaw.



Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw



Reverend Alberto E. Vargas, JCL. JV.
Chancellor *pro-tem*