

Dear Beloved Parish Family,

As many or most of you are aware, in 2007 I came to St. Stanislaus Kostka Church as a deacon. Imagine my joy in being named pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in June 2023 -- I had come "home."

At this same time, a sub-committee of the Pastoral Council had begun the task of reaching out to lapsed members of our parish community, which was the first time this had been done since the 2014 merger. Many of you can remember when there were thousands of parishioners registered at each site (St. Hyacinth and St. Stanislaus Kostka). As a parish, we are now - and unfortunately have been for some time - in a very different place regarding the number of registered and even active parishioners.

Due to these numbers, as well as many other factors, the Finance and Pastoral Council began the difficult work of discerning and discussing the future of the parish, and in June 2024, voted to close the St. Hyacinth location. After the subsequent period for comment, feedback was received and reviewed by Bishop Gruss and his advisors, who approved the closure of St. Hyacinth Church.

I know that many of you will be hurting regarding the news that we have reached the difficult decision to close St. Hyacinth Church.

This decision was not made lightly. It came only after deep study, reflection, and recognition of the growing limitations in continuing to provide effective pastoral and sacramental care.

As a priest and as your Pastor, I am hurting, as well. However, we must remain confident in God's plan for our parish community and for our diocese. God will be our cornerstone, no matter the space.

Please know of my love and prayers for each of you.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Nicholas Coffaro

Pastor

Q&A (Questions & Answers) Regarding the Closing of St. Hyacinth Church

Why is St. Hyacinth church being closed?

In recent years, the parish has experienced a sustained decline in active membership, leading to reduced sacramental participation and a significant decrease in financial resources. A comprehensive pastoral and financial review determined that the continued maintenance and operation of the Saint Hyacinth church site is no longer feasible or prudent. The parish Our Lady of Czestochowa is currently facing serious financial challenges, including several years of deficit spending largely due to the burden of maintaining two church campuses. As of now, the parish carries over \$1.1 million in debt and outstanding accounts payable.

When will the church officially close?

The official date of closure will be May 28, 2025. After this date and following the issuance of the second decree formally reducing the church to profane but not sordid use, the building will no longer be used for liturgical celebrations. (See definitions, below)

What will happen to All Saints Catholic School use of the gym?

Bay Area Catholic Schools may continue to use St. Hyacinth Gym at this time. Discussion regarding the continued use of the gym will take place at a later date to be determined.

What about the other groups that use the church and/or other buildings and properties?

The Christian Coffee House, "Growing together in Faith," and The Bay County East Side Little League may continue to use the buildings and fields at the current time. Discussion regarding future use of the buildings and fields will take place at a later date to be determined.

What will happen to the food pantry at St. Hyacinth?

There will be one parish food pantry which will be located at the Parish Center at the St. Stanislaus Kostka site.

Will there be a final Mass or Farewell event?

Yes, a closing Mass will take place on May 27, 2025.

Where will those who attended Mass at St. Hyacinth Church site go to celebrate the Mass and Sacraments?

Effective May 28, 2025, they will be attending St. Stanislaus Kostka Church site. The Saturday Evening Vigil Mass and confessions will be relocated to St. Stanislaus Church at a date to be announced. Please note that the 6:00pm Sunday evening Mass will be discontinued.

What will happen to the sacred objects and furnishings in the church?

The Diocesan Office of Liturgy and Department of Facilities Management will conduct an evaluation of the building to identify specific components and/or liturgical items which may be approved to remain and those which must be removed. Some of the Sacred objects will be retained for use in Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, other Sacred items will be made available

for use by other Catholic Churches and Institutions. We will ensure that our parishioners are kept informed throughout this process with thoughtful communication, fostering understanding and respect as we navigate this transition together.

What will happen to the church building after it closes?

The Church will remain secure with limited access by authorized individuals.

Can the church building be used for another purpose?

Yes, following subsequent decree from the bishop specifically the decree of reduction the church will no longer be used for liturgical celebrations and may be used only for profane but not sordid use. (See definitions, Below)

Will the property be sold? If so, who decides how it will be used?

The property may eventually be sold. The process of its sale will be determined collaboratively by the bishop, the pastor of the parish, and the Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils.

NOTE: The decrees and Q&As will be posted Monday morning on the parish website, as well as saginaw.org.

Applicable Definitions

Decree: An official decision or order made by the bishop or Church authority. It tells us what is to happen in a clear and formal way, especially about important matters in the Church.

Decree of Closure: The church will officially stop being used for Mass and religious services.

Decree of Profane but not Sordid Use: The church is no longer a sacred place, and can be used for good, everyday purposes – not anything disrespectful.