



DECREE

Reduction of a Church to Profane but not Sordid Use

Whereas, by decree dated 9 October 2025, the former parish of Our Lady of Grace (203 Adair Street, Griswold, IA), was merged by extinctive union into the parish of Ss Peter and Paul (106 West 6th Street, Atlantic, IA); and,

Whereas the legal and equitable assets and liabilities of the former parish of Our Lady of Grace became assets and liabilities of the parish of Ss Peter and Paul by virtue of the extinctive union; and

Whereas the pastor of the parish of Ss Peter and Paul, Very Reverend Trevor Chicoine spoke on the possibility of the reduction to profane but not sordid use of the Church building of Our Lady of Griswold during a 29 October 2025 meeting of the former finance council of Our Lady of Grace Parish; and,

Whereas, on 11 November 2025, the pastor of Ss Peter and Paul, after consultation with both his finance and pastoral council petitioned me to relegate the church building of the former parish of Our Lady of Grace to profane but not sordid use due to the continued and worsening disrepair of the building, the safety hazard that is beginning to be posed by certain parts of the building, and the risk to pastoral care and other ministries that the repairs of the building would pose; and,

Whereas, on 14 November 2025, I consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council on the question of the relegation of the church building of Our Lady of Grace to profane but not sordid use, supplying all necessary proofs and documentation to them; and,

Whereas, in the consideration of the question of reduction of church building of Our Lady of Grace, I evaluated and proposed the following facts concerning the state of the church building of Our Lady of Grace:

- The building is not in good repair.
- The cost of repairs would be approximately \$90,000-100,000.
- The cost of repairs would negatively impact the resources necessary for effective pastoral care and vibrant ministries at Ss Peter and Paul.
- The merged parish of Ss Peter and Paul has no use for this building.

And whereas the Diocesan Presbyteral Council voted to recommend that church building of Our Lady of Grace be relegated to profane but not sordid use on 14 November 2025; and,

Whereas I have concluded that the economic hardship of repairing the building and its lack of usefulness to the parish of Ss Peter and Paul constitute grave cause sufficient in law to support the relegation of the church building to profane but not sordid use; and,

Whereas I have determined that the good of souls will suffer no harm as the celebration of Mass and the sacraments are available at the nearby parishes of Ss Peter and Paul in Atlantic, St. Mary's Parish in Red Oak, and St. Timothy's in Reno.

I, the Most Reverend William M. Joensen, Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines, having in mind my responsibility to best address the spiritual needs of the people of the parish of Ss Peter and Paul specifically and the needs of the Diocese of Des Moines generally, hereby decree:

1. The church building of the former parish of Our Lady of Grace (203 Adair Street, Griswold, IA) shall be relegated to profane but not sordid use according to the prescripts of canon 1222 §2 for the grave causes mentioned above, fourteen days after the date of the promulgation of this decree, on 19 November 2025.
2. Negotiations that may lead to the sale of the property may start on 18 March 2026, notwithstanding the need to follow the proper procedures when it comes to effectively alienating the property.
3. Prior to alienation, all sacred objects, relics, sacred furnishings, bells, confessionals, altars, etc. are to be removed for use in other sacred edifices or to be stored in ecclesiastical custody. In case the altars cannot be removed, they must be destroyed (see canons 1212 and 1238).
4. This decree is to be published to the pastor of the parish of Ss Peter and Paul.
5. The parishioners of the parish of Ss Peter and Paul are to be given notice of this decree upon its receipt by the pastor of the parish. Copies of this decree are to be made available for inspection at the office of the parish, and information regarding the promulgation of the decree should be made available to the parishioners in the weekly bulletin, on the parish's website, and by announcement at the Sunday Masses.
6. Notice of this decree is to be published in the Diocesan magazine, *The Catholic Mirror*.
7. This decree is to be posted to the website of the Diocese.

All those who claim to have been aggrieved by this decree are herewith notified that, if they desire to file recourse against our decree, they are required, *ad validitatem*, to submit a petition to us within ten useful days from the legitimate notification of this decree (cf. c. 1734 §1).

Given at the Chancery, Des Moines, Iowa this 19 of November 2025.



Most Reverend William M. Joensen, Ph.D.
Bishop of Des Moines



Jason Kurth
Chancellor