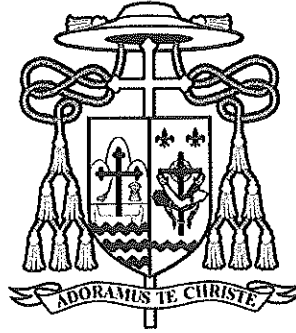


WILLIAM PATRICK

By the Grace of God and



the Favor of the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

DECREE RELEGATING SAINT MARY CHURCH IN BANGOR, WISCONSIN
TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

It is with great sadness and an abundance of gratitude that I write this decree. The sadness that comes from loss, that hole that remains when someone or something that we treasure ceases to be present among us. With this decree St. Mary Church in Bangor will be deconsecrated. At the beginning of its life as a Catholic church it was consecrated, set aside and made holy. It was reserved to be used for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries of our faith and to welcome the community of the faithful to prayer and worship. This action is very much like a death and to the many who will feel this loss deeply, know of my prayers for each of you as you mourn this loss. A parish church is a spiritual home and the people of the parish, family. To see this home turned over to another purpose causes pain so I ask the Lord to comfort you at this time and bring the peace only He can bring.

The gratitude I hold is for the countless families that have made St. Mary's a spiritual home. The church as beloved as it is, is not the parish. The parish is the people of God in a particular area and the faith that is shared moves from heart to heart and from generation to generation and will not be stopped unless we fail to share that faith with others. While this home will close and we will move to another, the memories we share are the foundations of our faith and this faith is the unbreakable bond that binds us together as a family in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The church of Saint Mary's holds many fond memories and a place in so many people's hearts because of the grace of God encountered in so many Sacraments and so many relationships through the years, the true gift is not within the walls of the building but within the hearts of the people. The legacy of Saint Mary Church in Bangor is not the building but the people who have been touched by Christ and go forth to bear fruit thirty, sixty and a hundred fold.

While it is with a somber demeanor that I accept the reasoning of the Parish Building Assessment Committee, Parish Council and Finance Council that St. Mary Church in Bangor is in a grave situation and is in its present state uninhabitable and that the cost of repair is an expense that is unmanageable by this small community. I have come to this

conclusion not only through their declaration but also by studying engineering reports provided by the parish, from letters received from the pastor and committees of the parish as well as personal observation and discussion during my visit of July 29, 2020. It is clear that the disrepair of the building is extensive and makes the building unsafe for any regular worship services.

I, therefore, decree the church building of Saint Mary Parish in Bangor to be relegated to profane (ordinary, non-sacred) but not sordid (evil, ignoble) use. That the pastor, Fr. Raja Kennedy Arul Samy, along with members of the parish remove all consecrated items from the church building, storing them for safe keeping and possible future use or, when necessary, disposing of them appropriately. I also request that a final plan for the disposition of the property be made with any acts of final alienation being brought to me for consultation with the Finance Council and College of Consultors. I remind all involved to be safe and to secure the building so no injury might occur.

The request of the combined Parish and Finance Councils meeting was to close the church building and be merged with Saint Leo the Great Parish in West Salem, Wisconsin. These are two separate juridic actions and this decree deals with the first. The second shall move forward with meetings of both parishes and guidance from the diocese particularly the Very Reverend Woodrow Pace, Director of the Office of Vicar for Clergy.

Offering my heartfelt prayers that the Holy family guide you through the loss of the Saint Mary Church building and the merging of two parish families into one, for we are all one in Christ.

Given at Holy Cross Diocesan Center this twenty-sixth day of October in the year of our Lord 2020 Monday the thirtieth week in Ordinary Time.

SEAL


Bishop of La Crosse

Very Rev. William A. Dhein
Chancellor