



**MOST REVEREND CHRISTOPHER J. COYNE
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD**

DECREE

*The Relegation to Profane but Not Sordid Use of
Saint Joseph Church, Waterbury, Connecticut*

WHEREAS, Saint Joseph Parish was originally created on March 28, 1894, for the Lithuanian immigrants in Waterbury, then merged with Saint Patrick Parish on June 29, 2017, to form Saint Blaise Parish, with two sacred edifices, that is Saint Patrick Church and Saint Joseph Church;

WHEREAS, subsequently Saint Patrick Parish was separated from Saint Blaise Parish, as an independent juridic entity, with its own sacred edifice of Saint Patrick Church. The remaining Saint Blaise Parish, with the sacred edifice of Saint Joseph Church, returned to its original name of Saint Joseph Parish in 2019;

WHEREAS, on February 1, 2024, the Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish and Saint Joseph Parish, Monsignor Vittorio Guerrera, wrote to the then Archbishop, The Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair, to formally request the merger of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish and Saint Joseph Parish in Waterbury;

WHEREAS, a decree of March 15, 2024, which took effect on May 1, 2024, following from canons 121 and 515, §2 of the Code of Canon Law (*CIC*), by which Saint Joseph Parish was subsumed into Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish; the separate juridic personalities ceased to exist and were no longer subject to the rights and obligation under canon law; the newly merged entity, known as Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, with two sacred edifices: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and Saint Joseph Church. The sacred edifice of Saint Joseph Church remained a sacred place of divine worship but without regularly scheduled Masses;

WHEREAS, Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne, received two petitions to reconsider the merger decree issued by Archbishop Blair on March 15, 2024, and after careful examination found that the proposed merger to be valid and licit;

WHEREAS, a decree of May 8, 2024, rejected the petitioner for revocation of the decree of the merger of May 1, 2024;

WHEREAS, on September 9, 2026, the Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish informed me that, since the successful merger of the aforementioned parishes with two churches, he, the Pastor, has been in ongoing consultations with the Transition Team/Finance Council of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish regarding the future use of Saint Joseph Church and its associated property and have concluded it will no longer be needed for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish for divine worship;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Pastor, supported by the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish trustees, recommended that Saint Joseph Church, located at 46 Congress Avenue, Waterbury, be relegated to profane but not sordid use;

WHEREAS, in accordance with canonical norms (*CIC*, cc. 127 §1; 166; 515 §2) convened the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council on September 21, 2026, for consultation on the question of the relegation of Saint Joseph Church to profane but not sordid use in light of the following facts:

- All other reasonable sources of funding or assistance have been considered and found lacking or inadequate to maintain the church building and facilities in general.
- The Lithuanian Museum of Waterbury is interested in purchasing the building for a museum dedicated to preserving the history of the Lithuanian community of Waterbury.
- The strategic pastoral planning for the Archdiocese has been committed to reduce the number of churches so that our local churches are characterized by spiritual vitality, organizational efficacy and accountability, and social and financial responsibility.
- Closure will not harm the good of souls.
- The unity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish will be promoted.

WHEREAS, all Presbyteral Council members (*CIC*, c.127, §1) unanimously voted in favor and recommended that Saint Joseph Church be relegated to profane but not sordid use;

WHEREAS, I have concluded that the economic hardship of maintaining the building and its lack of usefulness to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish constitute grave cause sufficient in law to support the relegation of the church building to profane but not sordid use;

WHEREFORE, having carefully considered the law and the facts, having received a formal written request on September 9, 2026, from the Pastor and the Trustees with the support of the Transition Team/Finance Council of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, and having heard the Presbyteral Council on September 21, 2026; having ensured by means of the original deeds and other documents as well as having heard from donors and/or their heirs whose consent is needed to perform this juridic act, in accordance with the norm of *CIC*, c. 1222, §2, thus having safeguarded the intentions/restrictions of the donors, and having ensured that the altars, sacred objects, and religious artifacts will be removed from the church in accordance with canonical norms;

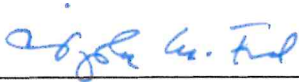
I, the undersigned Archbishop of Hartford, do pronounce, declare, and **DECREE** that the Saint Joseph Church building, located at 46 Congress Avenue, Waterbury, Connecticut be relegated to profane but not sordid use (*CIC*, c.1222, §2), effective October 26, 2026. It shall no longer be a sacred place used for divine worship and herewith will lose its blessing, dedication, and consecration (*CIC*, cc. 1212; 1238).

by

This decree is to be published ~~to~~ by the Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in accord with the canonical norms (*CIC*, c. 51). The substance of it is to be communicated to parishioners at the aforementioned parish, including by way of a display in an appropriate place so that parishioners can read it as they enter or exit the churches. It will also be available on the Archdiocese of Hartford website, under News-Public Notices: [<https://archdioceseofhartford.org/category/news/public-notices/>]. Canonical recourse may be made within the peremptory time limit of ten (10) business days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law (*CIC*, 1734, §2).

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut on the 25th day of September in the Year of Our Lord 2026.



Reverend Christopher M. Ford, J.C.L.
Chancellor



Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Archbishop of Hartford