



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

DECREE

*The Relegation to Profane but Not Sordid Use of
Our Lady of Peace Church in East Hartford, Connecticut*

WHEREAS, by decree of June 30, 2024, Saint Mary, Saint Christopher, Saint Rose and Our Lady of Peace Churches, following from canons 121 and 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law (*CIC*), by which they were subsumed into North American Martyrs Parish;

WHEREAS, since I relegated to profane but not sordid use the Saint Rose Church building on November 11, 2025, the merged juridic entity known as North American Martyrs Parish has three sacred edifices: Saint Mary, Saint Christopher, and Our Lady of Peace, all in East Hartford;

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2026, Reverend Timothy Ryan, the Pastor of North American Martyrs Parish, informed me that, since the successful merger of the aforementioned parishes with three churches, he, the Pastor, has been in ongoing consultations with the Finance Council and Parish Council of North American Martyrs Parish regarding the future use of Our Lady of Peace Church, its associated buildings, and the land owned by North American Martyrs, will no longer be needed by North American Martyrs Parish for divine worship;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Pastor, supported by the North American Martyrs Parish trustees, recommended that Our Lady of Peace Church, located at 370 May Road, East Hartford, be relegated to profane but not sordid use;

WHEREAS, the request of March 5, 2026 described the church building of Our Lady of Peace as a financial burden on the Parish due to the annual operating costs associated with maintaining the church while it is no longer needed for divine worship;

WHEREAS, in accordance with canonical norms (*CIC*, cc. 127 §1; 166; 515 §2) convened the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council on March 9, 2026, for consultation on the question of the relegation of Our Lady of Peace 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 strategic pastoral planning for the Archdiocese has been 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 North American Martyrs Parish will be promoted.
- The Saint Joseph Housing Corporation which is affiliated with the Archdiocese of Hartford is interested in purchasing the property for the development of affordable housing.

WHEREAS, all Presbyteral Council members (*CIC*, c.127 §1) unanimously voted in favor and recommended that Our Lady of Peace 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 North American Martyrs 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 request on March 5, 2026, from the Pastor and the Trustees with the support of the Finance and Parish Councils of North American Martyrs Parish, and having heard the Presbyteral Council on March 9, 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 Our Lady of Peace Church building, located at 370 May Road, East Hartford, Connecticut be relegated to profane but not sordid use (*CIC*, c.1222 §1), effective April 28, 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).


This decree is to be published to the Pastor of North American Martyrs 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-notice/>]. 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 11th day of March in the Year of Our Lord 2026.



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



Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Archbishop of Hartford