CLOSING FOR WORSHIP OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW CHURCH BUILDING, PENN HILLS, PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REDUCTION OF THE SAINT BARTHOLOMEW CHURCH BUILDING OF CHRIST THE DIVINE SHEPHERD PARISH TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE.

Whereas, Saint Bartholomew church located at 111 Erhardt Drive, church of the former Saint Bartholomew Parish, became part of the patrimony of the newly formed Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish with a decree issued on December 10, 2019 and effective on January 6, 2020, in accord with the norm of canon 122 §2.

Whereas, Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish was formed by the extincive union of Saint Bartholomew Parish, Saint Bernadette Parish, Saint Gerard Majella Parish, Saint Susanna Parish, and North American Martyrs Parish.

Whereas, the age and physical condition and maintenance of parish owned buildings, including church buildings, is beyond the ability of the parish to afford.

Whereas the Saint Bartholomew church building is in poor physical condition: the building’s roof has been breached which has caused ongoing damage to the interior, including falling plaster which has created a safety hazard as well as doing damage to the church’s organ, as well as the fact that the HVAC and electrical systems need repair or replacement, all of which are estimated to cost over $510,000, which exceeds the parish’s ability to afford.
Whereas Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish owns twenty buildings on six property sites of which the cost of ownership and maintenance is anticipated to amount to $1.5 million, which exceeds the ability of the parish to afford.

Whereas Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish, due to declining membership in recent years has been operating by deficit spending, projected to come to an amount of $330,000 for the year 2021 alone.

Whereas Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish has a debt of $1.2 million.

Whereas there is no other source of funding for the costs described above.

Whereas the dire financial situation of Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish poses a grave threat to the existence of the parish and its ability to continue to minister to the People of God within its territory.

Whereas the Saint Bartholomew church building is not needed by Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish.

Whereas, parish assemblies were held on May 12 and 13, 2021, to receive parishioner input regarding the possible closure of the church building.

Whereas, on June 11, 2021, the priest who serves as Moderator of the priests ministering to Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish in solidum in accord with canon 517 §1, with the recommendation of his parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, submitted a petition recommending the relegation to profane but not sordid use of Saint Bartholomew church building in Penn Hills, Pennsylvania.

Whereas, the care of souls will not be impacted as the members of Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish worship at the nearby Saint Bernadette and Saint Susanna churches.

Whereas, the rationale for the closing Saint Bartholomew church building for divine worship include the following: (1) the financial situation of the parish, including the parish's inability to continue maintaining six church buildings; (2) the need to reduce costs for the financial viability of the parish; (3) the required maintenance that this church building currently needs, the cost of which is beyond the ability of the parish to afford; (4) there is no other viable source of income to maintain the church; (5) the care of souls will not be greatly impacted because of the availability of other church buildings owned by the parish.

Therefore, having heard the Presbyteral Council on June 21, 2021 and the Vicars General June 22, 2021 and having received a unanimous favorable recommendation from both and in accord with the provisions of canon 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, I hereby close for worship Saint Bartholomew church building located at 111 Erhardt Drive and furthermore relegate to profane but not sordid use the same church building in accord with the norms of law.
In accordance with our diocesan norms, I also decree that the stained glass windows, sacred items, non-sacred artifacts and any work of some significance be removed to the extent possible for reuse in other sacred edifices in the parish or be transmitted to the Diocesan Archives for use by other ecclesiastical entities. This decree is effective at 12:01AM on Friday, August 6, 2021.

Finally, those who have the right, may appeal this decree in accordance with the prescriptions of the law.

Given at Pittsburgh this 9th day of July, in the year of Our Lord 2021.

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

Ellen M. Mady
Chancellor