



Joseph Charles Bambera

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA
EPISCOPUS SCRANTONENSIS



DECREE

In the name of God. Amen.

WHEREAS, utilizing the Diocese of Scranton's *Vision 2030: Creating Parish Communities Rooted in the Life of Jesus Christ* process, a pastoral planning process addressing the long-range needs and challenges of the Diocese of Scranton that aims to look proactively at the realities of our local church in the present moment while striving to meet the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade, with the goal of creating vibrant parish communities rooted in the life of Jesus Christ, and;

WHEREAS, the territorial parish of Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish in Wilkes-Barre has as its principal church Saint Nicholas Church, 226 South Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre, and has as its secondary church Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, 134 South Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre, and;

WHEREAS, the parish community has experienced a significant reduction of the Christian Faithful participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of the parish due to an aging population and relocation of residents of the territory, and;

WHEREAS, the diminishing number of faithful whose donations principally sustain the parish community has resulted in the continued inability to sustain ordinary maintenance and operations, and;

WHEREAS, the Reverend Joseph D. Verespy, Pastor of Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish, in collaboration with the Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Pastoral Council and Finance Council and with the recommendation of the clergy of the Wilkes-Barre deanery, supports the desire and need to relegate Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church to profane but not sordid use, and;

THEREFORE, having heard the Presbyteral Council and received its favorable recommendation on November 19, 2024, I hereby decree the reduction of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, Wilkes-Barre, to profane but not sordid use in accord with the norms of canon 1222 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, effective with the closing Mass on January 12, 2025.

In fulfillment of the requirements of canon 51, the reasons for the reduction of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church are:

1. Changing demographics of the community, resulting in dwindling Mass attendance;
2. Concentration of Mass time availability at principal parish churches in the immediate geographic area;
3. Declining number of priests;
4. In holding the assets and liabilities of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish is financially burdened;
5. Ready and effective assistance available to the parish from the sale of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church; and
6. The Presbyteral Council, the regional Episcopal Vicar, the Vicar Forane, and Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish Pastor, Pastoral Council and Finance Council are all in favor of the reduction.

Furthermore, there are no individuals who can claim any rights over this church and I am confident that the good of souls will not be harmed by this decree.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Scranton, on November 19, 2024



Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton



Linda E. Price, J.C.L.
Chancellor