



Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Providence
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Providence, RI 02903
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DECREE IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

In July 2018, due to gradual patterns of population decline, in sacramental practice, and in ordinary income due to changing demographics, St. Brigid Parish, Johnston, was merged canonically into neighboring St. Rocco Parish, and, at the same time, the St. Brigid church building became a “mission” of St. Rocco Parish. Since its solemn consecration in 1914, St. Brigid Church has functioned as a spiritual home for generations of Catholics in the Thornton neighborhood of Johnston and for the celebrations of Holy Mass, baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

In the months following the canonical merger, weekly Mass attendance at St. Brigid plummeted, to the point where total attendance at the remaining Sunday Mass was approximately 25 – 30 individuals. For this reason, and in reply to the specific request of the pastor of St. Rocco Parish, I granted permission to discontinue Masses and all public worship at the St. Brigid church building as of November 18, 2018.

Within these intervening months, causes have been identified that, taken together, support the case that the situation regarding the church building has become increasingly tenuous. The complete lack of communal and liturgical life, as well as the ongoing maintenance costs and the financial inability to comply with documented property-insurance citations (extensive water/moisture damage in church and church hall, repairs to the exterior front and side stairs), make impossible the sustainability of the church building. The now-unused church building would continue to deteriorate and become a potential neighborhood safety hazard in that residential area. Permanent closing is also a canonical pre-requisite in order to place the church building on the real-estate market. In their letter of March 28, 2019, the pastor and parish leadership of St. Rocco Parish suggested that I now permanently close the church building.

Therefore, at the recommendation of the pastor and leadership of St. Rocco Parish, Johnston; having determined that a combination of just causes is present; confident that the

good of souls will suffer no harm; having heard the College of Consultors and the Council of Priests on April 10, 2019 as required by Canons 1222, §2, and 515, §2; I hereby decree that:

1. The St. Brigid church building, Johnston, is relegated from sacred to secular (but not sordid) use;
2. The church simultaneously loses its former status as a sacred place. Therefore, Mass and any other public worship or liturgical act is now prohibited there. This means that the church building is closed permanently;
3. All items inside the church be inventoried. Since they are the property of St. Rocco Parish, they should be made available first to St. Rocco, and then to other parishes.

The effective date of this decree is July 1, 2019 at 12:01am.

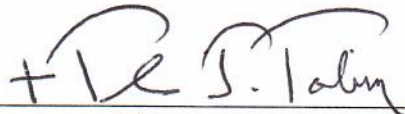
I direct that this decree be forwarded to the pastor of St. Rocco Parish, who will provide copies to parishioners at weekend Masses on May 4 - 5, 2019.

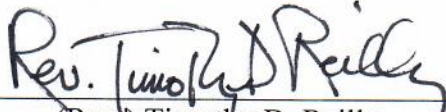
Parishioners who wish to make recourse against this decree have the right to do so. According to Church law (Canon 1734, §2), they must do so **within 10 (ten) business days** of receiving notification of this decree. Any recourse must be submitted in writing via postal mail to Bishop Tobin by May 17, 2019 and must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

I assure all involved in the transition of St. Brigid Church of my continued prayers.

Given in Providence,
at the Chancery,
this 30th of April 2019




Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Providence


(Rev.) Timothy D. Reilly
Chancellor