



Donald
By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See
Bishop of Sioux Falls
Decree of Relegation
Saint Peter Church of Deuel County

On October 20, 2021, I issued a decree establishing, through modification, a merger of St. Peter Parish of Deuel County, Gary, SD, with St. Mary Parish of Deuel County, Clear Lake, SD.

On December 13, 2023, after consulting with parish leadership, former parishioners, and the parish finance council, the Reverend Brian Eckrich, pastor of St. Mary Parish of Deuel County, discerned that the continued use of the Church of St. Peter in Deuel County, Gary, SD was no longer feasible. Consequently, he wrote to me and the chancellor of the Diocese of Sioux Falls recommending that St. Peter Church be relegated to profane but not sordid use (c. 1222 §2).

A church may be relegated to profane but not sordid use when, after hearing the presbyteral council, the diocesan bishop determines there is a “grave cause” or “grave causes” indicating a church should no longer be used for divine worship and that the good of the souls suffers no detriment from the relegation.

The grave reasons established that (1) 16 of the 43 households of the former parish of St Peter were registered at St. Mary Parish. Of the 16 households, 5 were regular contributors, and very few of the others were supporting St Mary Parish, which now has the responsibility of caring for the building in grounds at St. Peter in Gary.

(1) The ever-rising cost associated with an empty building did not justify the building's underutilization. Lack of use with no weddings and four funerals over an 18-month period. When Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, or an occasional Mass was offered, attendance was very low.

(2) St. Peter Church is not needed for divine worship for the average of 75 Sunday Worshippers regularly attending there in 2019. This Number of worshippers is now well accommodated in the 275-seat parish church at St. Mary in Clear Lake.

(3) The sale of St. Peter Church will benefit the mission of the new parish with ready cash proceeds, which can be used to advance parish ministry and support ongoing maintenance of the cemeteries of the parish. There will be additional savings from unspent maintenance expenses and unspent capital repairs.

(4) Preserving St. Peter Church for worship will result in continued and unnecessary operation and maintenance costs that will hinder the ability of St. Mary's Parish to serve the poor, enhance its evangelical mission, and remain viable.



It is unreasonable to expect a parish formed from the extinctive union to maintain a church it cannot afford, does not need, and is no longer useful for divine worship. Furthermore, there are no parochial, diocese, or other known sources of funds available to keep and maintain St. Peter Church as a place of Catholic worship. There is no governmental assistance for building or maintaining churches in the United States of America.

The reasonable and safe solution for the parish is to relegate St. Peter Church to profane but not sordid use, allowing it to be sold or otherwise developed for the benefit of the new parish, its ministries, and the work of charity.

THEREFORE, know that I, Bishop Donald E. DeGrood of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, according to the norms of the Code of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council electronically on December 20, 2023, and now, having received the unanimous recommendation from the council to relegate St. Peter Church in Gary, SD, to profane but not sordid use; invoking the Holy Spirit; satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment and that the parish church of St. Mary is sufficient for the needs of the parish,

I hereby decree the following:

1. Effective immediately, St. Peter Church in Gary, SD, is relegated to profane but not sordid use;
2. The pastor of St. Mary Parish of Deuel County will ensure the real property associated with St. Peter Church is secure for the benefit of St. Mary Parish;
3. If alienated, St. Peter Church is to provide St. Mary Parish with the proceeds from the sale of the property;
4. The reports provided and recommendations of the Presbyteral Council on this matter are available upon request to eligible parties; and
5. Notification of this decree is to be made immediately through publication on the Diocesan website. It is then to be sent to the pastor of St. Mary Parish for communication to parishioners through publication in the parish bulletin or other suitable means. Petition for the amendment of the decree is to be made according to the norm of canon 1734.

Given at the Chancery
on the 28th Day of December
Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs
in the Year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-three.

Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood
Bishop of Sioux Falls

Mr. Thad A. Pals
Chancellor