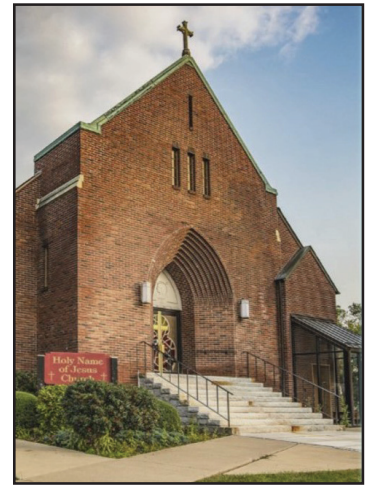


NOTICE OF COMMUNICATION TO PARISHIONERS OF SAINT JOHN NEUMANN PARISH, SCRANTON

JUNE 26, 2022



For the last several years, the Diocese of Scranton has been working proactively to address the realities of our local church while striving to meet the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade. The Diocese created its *Vision 2030 Pastoral Planning Process* in order to create vibrant expressions of parish life rooted in the life of Jesus Christ.

The process addresses ongoing parish needs by examining four distinct priority drivers:

- Vibrancy of Parish Life
- Condition of Facilities
- Financial Viability of a Parish
- Distribution and Availability of Clergy

Since 2010, **Holy Name of Jesus Church**, 1414 East Elm Street, Scranton, has served as a secondary worship site for Saint John Neumann Parish. In recent years, demographic changes have resulted in a sustained decrease in Mass attendance and a diminishing number of faithful whose donations sustain the parish. The overall financial condition of Saint John Neumann Parish is considered to be challenged and a review of church property indicates that approximately \$130,000 in maintenance needs will be needed at Holy Name of Jesus Church alone over the next decade.

Over the last several months, in the spirit of the *Vision 2030* process, conversation and consultation has taken place within the parish community regarding the future of Holy Name of Jesus Church, which includes, but is not limited to:

- In **September 2021**, after Masses at Holy Name of Jesus Church were halted during the COVID-19 pandemic, church leaders wanted to gauge the continued need for the worship space so they reinstated the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass.
- By **March 2022**, parish leaders realized only 30-35 people were attending Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church each week, prompting questions whether it was in the best financial interest to keep the site open for worship.
- On **March 9, 2022**, Monsignor Joseph G. Quinn, pastor, held a meeting of the Joint Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils of Saint John Neumann Parish and Saint Paul of the Cross Parishes (the two parishes are currently linked) in which a discussion began regarding the future of Holy Name of Jesus Church.
- On **March 13, 2022**, all parishioners were informed of the topics discussed at the Joint meeting via parish bulletin. Parish bulletins have been utilized during this entire time frame to explain the *Vision 2030* Pastoral Planning process.
- On **April 20, 2022**, a second Joint Parish Pastoral and Finance Council meeting took place. Discussions continued.
- On **May 29, 2022**, Monsignor Quinn once again informed all parishioners of Saint John Neumann Parish (and Saint Paul of the Cross Parish) during Masses about the possibility of closing Holy Name of Jesus Church.
- On **June 5, 2022**, a two-page letter was published in the parish bulletin addressing why the closure of Holy Name of Jesus Church was in the best interest of the parish community.
- On **June 15, 2022**, the Joint Parish Pastoral and Finance Council met for a third time. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council have provided consent to move forward with the closure of Holy Name of Jesus Church.
- On **June 21, 2022**, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera consulted the Diocesan Presbyteral Council (a consultative body of priests from throughout the Diocese) regarding the closure of Holy Name of Jesus Church (defined in canon law as the “relegation of a church to profane but not sordid use”). Following a presentation of data, the Presbyteral Council voted in unanimous agreement with the measure.

As a result of this conversation and consultation, on **June 22, 2022**, Bishop Bambera signed a formal decree (which is a document that formalizes a decision within the Church) to best address the spiritual needs of the faithful as well as the needs of the Diocese of Scranton. The decree contains the following information:

Holy Name of Jesus Church, Scranton, will be closed (defined in canon law as “relegated to profane but not sordid use”) on Sunday, July 17, 2022. Clergy and parishioners will celebrate a final Sunday Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church at 8 a.m. on that date. Furthermore, the future of the property will be determined by Saint John Neumann Parish, in consultation with the Diocese of Scranton, but will conform with Catholic faith and morals and with its dignity as a former place of divine worship.

The official decree regarding the relegation of Holy Name of Jesus Church, Scranton, can be found on the reverse side.



Joseph Charles Bambera

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA
EPISCOPUS SCRANTONENSIS



DECREE

In the Name of God. Amen.

WHEREAS, Holy Name of Jesus Church, located at 1414 East Elm Street in Scranton, a secondary church of Saint John Neumann Parish, and;

WHEREAS, Reverend Monsignor Joseph G. Quinn, J.C.L., Pastor of Saint John Neumann Parish, with the consent of both the Saint John Neumann Pastoral and Finance Councils and in consultation with parishioners, has petitioned the undersigned to relegate Holy Name of Jesus Church to profane but not sordid use, and;

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, and;

WHEREAS, changing demographics of the community have resulted in dwindling Mass attendance and a diminishing number of faithful whose donations sustain the parish, and;

WHEREAS, after a careful consideration of the pastoral and financial needs, a determination was reached that the cost of maintaining Holy Name of Jesus Church as a secondary church of Saint John Neumann Parish, and;

WHEREAS, Nativity of Our Lord Church, located at 633 Orchard Street, Scranton, Pennsylvania, which is the principal church of Saint John Neumann Parish, is more than adequate to meet the liturgical and sacramental needs of Saint Neumann Parish, and;

WHEREAS, also taking into consideration the needs of the entire Diocese of Scranton, especially in light of the shortage of priests available for ministry and in view of the current demographical shifts that have resulted in a diminished number of faithful in the surrounding area, I have decided to permanently relegate Holy Name of Jesus Church to profane but not sordid use, and;

WHEREAS, I have carefully followed the provision set forth in *CIC* canon 1222 §2 and have determined with moral certitude that the care of souls would suffer no detriment, and;

WHEREAS, having determined that no other consulted parties can legitimately claim rights for themselves at Holy Name of Jesus Church, I presented this matter for consultation with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, and having considered the matter carefully the Presbyteral Council unanimously supported my decision to relegate this church;

THEREFORE, I, the undersigned Bishop of Scranton, decree that Holy Name of Jesus Church, a secondary church of Saint John Neumann Parish, is hereby relegated to profane but not sordid use according to the precepts of *CIC* canon 1222, §2.

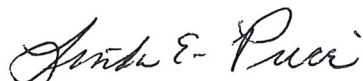
At the same time, I order this decree to be made public to the parishioners of Saint John Neumann Parish on the weekend of June 25-26th and on the website of the Diocese of Scranton. The closing Mass is scheduled to be celebrated on Sunday, July 17, 2022.

Any persons who are legitimately aggrieved by this decree are herewith notified that, should they decide to file recourse against this decree, they are required, *ad validitatem*, to submit a petition to the undersigned in light of the precepts contained in *CIC* canons 1732-1739 within ten useful days from the legitimate notification of this decree. Moreover, should recourse against this decree be lodged, it has suspensive effect *ipso iure*.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Scranton on the 22nd day of June in the Year of Our Lord, 2022,



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



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