



DECREE
OF THE RELEGATION OF
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH, MARCUS HOOK
TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

Immaculate Conception Parish, Marcus Hook, was founded as a personal parish for Catholics of Italian descent residing in Marcus Hook, Chester, Linwood, Boothwyn, and Trainer. In 2013, the Parish was extinguished, along with Holy Saviour Parish, Linwood, upon their union with St. John Fisher Parish, Boothwyn.

While Saint John Fisher Parish is on a relatively strong financial footing, since the merger of parishes, it has cost the Parish approximately \$300,000 to maintain Immaculate Conception Church. Its roof currently needs repairs, and the boiler requires regular maintenance to continue operating, and will need to be replaced at some point. In general, the age and condition of the building indicate that maintenance costs will only rise over time. For this reason, on 2 June 2025, after consultation with the finance and pastoral councils of the Parish, Father James Otto, Pastor of St. John Fisher, petitioned me to relegate the Church to profane but not sordid use.

Since the Church is capable of being used for divine worship, having received the petition along with supporting information requested by the Chancery Office, I referred the matter to the Council of Priests, in accord with the norm of can. 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law. Material pertaining to the petition was sent to the members of the Council on 27 January 2026, and arguments for and against the petition were considered at their meeting on 19 February 2026.

The following factors were taken into consideration:

1. The Church of Immaculate Conception has served since 2013 as a worship site for St. John Fisher, Boothwyn, located approximately 3 miles away, accessible 10 minutes by car. In the last two years, there have been requests for only one wedding and three funerals at Immaculate Conception Church.
2. Care was taken at the time of the merger to unite all three parish communities at St. John Fisher, with significant elements of each Church being tangibly incorporated into the fabric of the Parish Church. After the relegation and alienation of Holy Saviour Church, even some of those most attached to Immaculate Conception have come to recognize that there is no objective need for the Parish to have a secondary worship site.

3. Father held a “town hall” meeting to discuss the proposed relegation and invited feedback from the faithful on multiple occasions. The consensus seems to be that the Church’s relegation, though sad, would serve the best interests of the Parish community. Because of the proximity of Immaculate Conception to the Parochial Church, and the strong sense of unity that has already been fostered there, Father Otto does not believe that the good of souls will be harmed by the relegation of the Church.

While no one factor alone would provide grounds for the relegation of the Church, the Council of Priests was unanimous in its support for the petition, concluding that a sufficiently grave cause could be determined by the concurrence of such factors seen as a comprehensive whole, in light of the concrete pastoral needs of the Parish.

Therefore, in virtue of the prescripts of canons 1212 and 1222 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, having consulted the Council of Priests on 19 February 2026, having heard their unanimous opinion that these factors constitute a sufficiently grave cause, and having ascertained that the good of souls will not thereby be harmed, I hereby

DECREE

**that Immaculate Conception Church, Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania,
be relegated to profane but not sordid use.**

This Decree is effective as of July 19, 2026, and is to be communicated to the members of St. John Fisher Parish and to the faithful of this Archdiocese in an appropriate manner. All things to the contrary notwithstanding. Canonical recourse to this decree is to be sought according to the norms of canon law.

Given at the Curia of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, on the 4th day of June, in the year of our Lord 2026, in accord with the norm of law.



Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia

SEAL



Rev. Richard K. McFadden, J.C.L.
Vice Chancellor