



Decree

Relegating The Church of the Annunciation, Baltimore, Maryland St. Michael the Archangel Parish To Profane But Not Sordid Use

History

The Church of the Annunciation Parish was established in 1968 to meet the needs of the expanding population located between existing parishes in the northeast part of Baltimore City and those of adjacent exurban parishes.

Current Situation

The church became a secondary edifice on December 1, 2024, after the extinctive merger of the Church of the Annunciation Parish into St. Michael the Archangel Parish. The last regularly scheduled Sunday Mass at Annunciation was celebrated on November 24, 2024. Since the merger with St. Michael the Archangel Parish, the church has remained available for use at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Two funerals have been held in the church since its last Sunday Mass. On January 15th, 2025, the pastor and the parish leadership determined that it was appropriate to seek permission to alienate the property and reduce the church to profane use, given the limited available assets of the parish and the financial challenge of caring for the Church of the Annunciation and one other secondary church. The concerns of the pastor and pastoral leadership are based on the financial realities outlined below.

Even before the Church of the Annunciation's extinctive merger, the previous parish had struggled to pay for its upkeep and maintenance, given the small number of parishioners. The deferred maintenance costs for the combined church-hall building during this and next year are \$1,137,365. To fund fully this and future maintenance work requires an annual investment of \$179,158. In addition to the church, the Annunciation Campus also includes a rectory and a garage. The total deferred

maintenance costs for all structures on the campus for this and next year will be \$1,313,353. To fund fully this amount and future work requires an annual investment of \$224,226. In addition, the Annunciation campus incurred \$60,311 in annual carrying costs (these costs are independent of the staffing or use of the church, e.g., insurance and utilities) during the previous year.

The St. Michael the Archangel Parish Campus, which consists of a church and rectory, has \$962,504 in deferred maintenance needs during this and next year, requiring an annual investment of \$322,463 to fund fully this and other future needed work. The campus incurred annual carrying costs of \$188,495 during the previous fiscal year.

Besides its own campus and the Church of the Annunciation Campus, St. Michael the Archangel Parish is responsible for the St. Clement Mary Hofbauer Campus, with that church serving as an additional worship site for the St. Michael the Archangel Parish. The St. Clement Mary Hofbauer Campus consists of the church, rectory, office, friary, Curan House, school, and storage building. These buildings' deferred maintenance needs for this and next year total \$448,775. To fund fully this and future work requires an annual investment of \$261,081. The annual carrying cost for this campus is \$147,788.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish has an anticipated offertory income for the current fiscal year of \$566,114. Even with a hoped-for increase in offertory and other income as the merged parishes come together and grow, St. Michael the Archangel Parish has insufficient financial resources to support properly the physical-plant needs of the Church of the Annunciation.

It was hoped that the merger of the Church of the Annunciation Parish with St. Michael the Archangel Parish would result in better financial health for the parish, but the financial challenges have continued. Thus, St. Michael the Archangel Parish does not have the financial ability to support an additional church in a manner suitable for the worthy celebration of the sacraments. The attempt to do so is impeding the parish's ability to support other pastoral needs and outreach. The financial strain is depriving the other church campuses of receiving proper support, thereby harming the overall apostolate of the parish.

The current parish church, St. Michael the Archangel Church, is 2.1 miles (4.2 kilometers) from the Church of the Annunciation.

According to the law, in order to relegate a church to profane use, or even to close it permanently, it is necessary that there be some grave reason(s) suggesting that the church no longer be used for divine worship. Often the gravity of the cause becomes evident when a number of factors are considered together. Can. 1222 §2 states:

Where other grave causes suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship, the diocesan bishop, after having heard the presbyteral council, can relegate it to profane but not sordid use, with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church, and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment thereby.

The pastor and parish leadership held meetings and discussions regarding the potential future of the church before the submission of their request to reduce the church to profane but not sordid use to allow for the marketing and potential alienation of the property. Being the only person who can legitimately claim rights concerning the church edifice, the pastor has given his consent (cf. can. 1222 §2).

The pastor attests that the relegation of the Church of the Annunciation will not result in any harm to the good of souls (cf. can. 1222 §2).

In accordance with the requirements of canon 1222 §2, the Presbyteral Council carefully considered the proposal to reduce the Church of the Annunciation to profane use at their regularly scheduled meeting on November 18th, 2025. Members received pertinent information regarding this request prior to the meeting. After carefully considering the facts of the matter, the members voted unanimously to recommend that the Archbishop of Baltimore approve the request, given the financial situation in the parish.

All the requirements of canons 50, 51, 127, 166, and 515 have been fulfilled.

Therefore, having first and foremost before me the best possible means to provide for the care of souls for the faithful of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, while considering the following:

- The Church of the Annunciation Church no longer serves as a parish church;
- The Church of the Annunciation requires annual expenditure (investment for deferred maintenance and carrying costs) of \$284,537 by St. Michael the Archangel Parish;
- St. Michael the Archangel parish is responsible for another church campus, which requires an annual expenditure of \$408,869;
- Regularly scheduled Masses ceased at the parish on November 24, 2024;
- Maintenance of an additional church has placed an unsustainable financial burden on St. Michael the Archangel Parish;
- The parish lacks the financial means to maintain and provide for the proper upkeep of the Church of the Annunciation, since income is insufficient to continue supporting the church in a manner befitting a Catholic place of worship;

- There is no pastoral need for the church edifice in this parish, given the availability of the seated parish church and another worship site within its boundaries and given the number of parishioners;
- The pastor and members of the parish leadership have petitioned for the relegation of the church; and,
- There does not appear to be any probable detriment to the good of souls.

I do hereby judge, based on the aforementioned reasons, considered cumulatively, that they constitute the grave cause required by the law (cf. can. 1222 §2) for the relegation of the church to profane but not sordid use, and I hereby decree the following:

The Church of the Annunciation of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Baltimore, Maryland, is to be relegated to profane but not sordid use, according to the norm of can. 1222 §2. Relegation will occur as noted in this decree. At that time, it will herewith lose its blessing and consecration. It will no longer be used for divine worship.

I also decree that, prior to the final alienation of this property, the altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts are to be removed from the church in accordance with the law.

This decree is to be promulgated immediately and will take effect on the 13th day of January 2026, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. It is to be communicated to the pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, who is to inform the parishioners regarding this decree. It may be challenged within the peremptory time limit of ten days in accordance with the norm of law (canon 1734 §2).

Given at the Chancery in Baltimore, Maryland on the 9th day of January 2026.

+William E. Lori

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore

Diane L. Barr

Dr. Diane L. Barr, JD, JCD, PhD
Chancellor

