



MOST REVEREND DOUGLAS J. LUCIA
BISHOP OF SYRACUSE

DECREE
ON THE EXTINGTIVE UNION – MERGER OF THE
PARISH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, UTICA, NEW YORK
WITH THE PARISH OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, NEW HARTFORD, NEW YORK
AND THE REDUCTION OF THE
CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, NEW HARTFORD, NEW YORK
TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

Whereas the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes was established in 1919, and its current church in Utica was dedicated in 1969;

Whereas the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary was established in 1949, and its current church in New Hartford was dedicated in 1949;

Whereas various factors (i.e., changing demographics of the town and the parish, financial concerns, limited resources, etc.) necessitated the linkage of the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes with the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary for the sake of proper pastoral care in 2014;

Whereas the shortage of people in the parish and clergy in the Diocese of Syracuse necessitated the placement of the pastoral care of the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of the Rosary under the direction of one pastor (can. 526 §1);

Whereas the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of the Rosary have been functioning as one parochial entity called “Mary, Mother of our Savior” (i.e., shared clergy, finance and pastoral councils, faith formation and parish programs, bulletin, etc.) with two worship sites since 2021;

Whereas the current pastor to whom the parishes are entrusted, Reverend Jason Hage, reviewed with the parish trustees, finance council, and pastoral council, the sacramental statistics, Mass attendance, vitality, limited financial resources, and maintenance concerns of the church building of the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary as well as the shortage of clergy in the Diocese of Syracuse;

Whereas the status of the parishes and church buildings (demographics, finances, maintenance, etc.) was previously presented at various town hall meetings with parishioners and recently reviewed by the pastoral and finance councils and examined by parishioners via the annual State of the Parish and financial reports, which resulted in a consensus to petition me to canonically merge the parishes and relegate the church of Our Lady of the Rosary to profane but not sordid use for the purpose of alienating the property in order to ensure the existence and vitality of the canonically merged parish;

Whereas Reverend Jason Hage petitioned me to relegate the church of Our Lady of the Rosary to profane but not sordid use because: (1) there was a significant decline in the number of people attending Mass and celebrating the sacraments at the parishes from the time they were established, (2) the needs of the parishes for worship and pastoral care are being adequately met at the church of Our Lady of Lourdes, which has functioned as the principal church of the parochial entity since 2021, (3) the church of Our Lady of the Rosary is in need of substantial repairs and continual maintenance, and (4) the financial resources of the parish are limited and cannot support both the maintenance of two churches and the pastoral care of the people;

Whereas where 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 hereby (canon 1222 §2);

Whereas the grave cause of relegation to profane but not sordid use may exist not in one obvious grave cause but may arise from a combination of many just causes which combined together manifest a grave cause (see Congregation for Clergy, *Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes, the Closure or Relegation of Churches to Profane but not Sordid Use, and the Alienation of the Same*, April 30, 2013, Prot. No. 20131348);

Whereas, having examined the facts of the present case, it has been well established that grave reasons required by canon 1222 §2 are present, even if some of the reasons invoked may not by themselves constitute a grave cause, they do so when taken together;

Whereas after a careful examination, it was established that nobody could legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church, understood primarily as patrimonial rights or rights associated with patrimonial rights (see Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, Final Decree of the College of Judges, 21 November 1988, *Communicationes* 20 [1988] 93);

Whereas, I convoked the Presbyteral Council on 9 December 2025 and presided over it according to the norm of law (cans. 127 §1, 166 §1, and 500 §1), placing the modification (extinctive union-merger) of the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Utica and Our Lady of the Rosary, New Hartford as well the relegation of the church of Our Lady of the Rosary, New Hartford on the agenda ahead of

time, ensuring that a summary of the status of each parish and church was provided to the members of the Council (can. 50), proposing the modification and relegation separately, seeking the informed and free counsel of the members concerning each individual proposed action (can. 515 §2), listening to arguments both for and against the proposed modification and relegation, and receiving unanimous support for the proposed modification and relegation;

Therefore, I the undersigned Bishop of Syracuse, after prayerful consideration, having weighed all the reasons and causes, have decided as follows:

DECREE

1. The parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Utica and Our Lady of the Rosary, New Hartford are hereby united via an extinctive union - merger for the sake of proper pastoral care. The name of the canonical merged parish is, "Mary, Mother of Our Savior." The members and geographical territory of the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Utica and Our Lady of the Rosary, New Hartford are the members and geographical territory of the parish of Mary, Mother of Our Savior. All sacramental registers hitherto preserved at Our Lady of Lourdes, Utica and Our Lady of the Rosary, New Hartford are faithfully preserved at Mary, Mother of Our Savior according to the norms of can. 535 §§ 1-5.
2. The church of Our Lady of the Rosary, located at 1736 Burrstone Road, New Hartford, New York of the parish of Mary, Mother of Our Savior is hereby reduced to profane but not sordid use according to the prescripts of canon 1222 §2 for the grave causes mentioned above.
3. The church of Our Lady of Lourdes located at 2222 Genesee Street, Utica, New York, is hereby officially designated as the sole church of the parish.
4. Negotiations that may lead to the sale of the property of Our Lady of the Rosary can begin, following the proper procedures for alienation.
5. Prior to alienation, all sacred objects, relics, sacred furnishings, stained-glass windows, bells, confessionals, altars, etc. are to be removed for use in other sacred edifices or to be stored in ecclesiastical custody. In case the altars cannot be removed, they must be destroyed (see canons 1212 and 1238).

This merger and relegation will become effective on 16 July 2026, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

I further order this decree to be made public to all the faithful through its publication on this day, 16 June 2026. This publication on the diocesan website (www.syrдио.org), on the website of the local diocesan newspaper (thecatholicsun.com) with notification in the newspaper itself, on the parish website, and in the parish bulletin will be the legitimate notification. A notarized copy of the decree will be sent to the pastor.

This decree may be challenged by anyone who feels aggrieved by it within the peremptory time limit of ten useful days from the legitimate notification of the decree, that is, on 16 June 2026, by seeking its revocation or emendation directly from me (can. 1734 §2).

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Syracuse on this fourth day of June in the year of our Lord, two-thousand twenty-six.



Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse



Rev. Christopher R. Seibt
Vice Chancellor