

Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Providence
One Cathedral Square
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 278-4546

DECREE IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Since its solemn dedication in 1973, St. Benedict Church, Warwick, has functioned as a spiritual home for families and for the celebration of the sacraments. However, in recent years, the gradual decrease in parishioners has resulted in diminished parish income. At the same time, normal parish operating costs have continued, and the current, ordinary annual operating expenses for the church building and its property are approximately \$138,269. Since 2017, St. Benedict and St. Kevin parishes have shared one assigned priest, and the parishioners of St. Benedict have long migrated elsewhere. The most-recent scheduled weekend Mass at the St. Benedict church building was offered on March 8, 2020 (just before the onset of the pandemic), and with the exception of an occasional Funeral Mass, all liturgical and social activity at the St. Benedict church building is now ceased altogether. A recent inspection report by Catholic Mutual Group indicates that the church building's flat rubber roof should be put on a short-term plan for replacement due to prior repair needs and age; that the main interior church ceiling has numerous old water stains above the choir area and in front of the altar; and, that the large west side parking lot behind the church has several areas that need regrading, repaving and relining. The total estimated cost is approximately \$80,000.00. Sadly, this is truly a scenario of a vacant, largely-unused church building without a community to house.

The parish administrator of St. Benedict Parish and the Diocese of Providence have identified these causes that, taken together, support the case that the situation regarding the church building has become increasingly tenuous. For these reasons, in their letter of October 4, 2021, the parish administrator, parish trustees, and parish finance council recommended that I permanently close the church building.

Therefore, at the request of the parish administrator, trustees, and finance council of St. Benedict Parish; having determined that several factors are present; having heard those affected by the request; having heard the College of Consultors on October 13, 2021 and the Council of Priests on October 13, 2021 as required by Canons 1222, §2, and 515, §2; I hereby decree that:

1. The St. Benedict church building, Warwick, is relegated from sacred to secular (but not sordid) use;
2. The church simultaneously loses its former status as a sacred place. Therefore, Mass and any other public worship or liturgical act is now prohibited there. This means that the church building is closed permanently;
3. All items inside the church be inventoried carefully and made available first to St. Kevin Parish, Warwick, and then to other parishes.

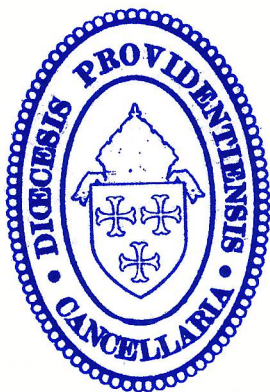
The effective date of this decree is November 17, 2021 at 11:59pm.


I also direct that this decree be forwarded to Father Robert Marciano, parish administrator of St. Benedict and pastor of St. Kevin Parish, Warwick, who will provide copies to parishioners at all weekend Masses at St. Kevin Parish on October 23 - 24, 2021.

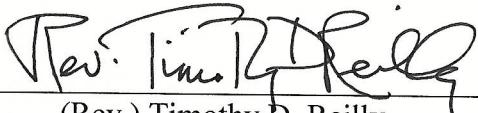
Parishioners who wish to make recourse against this decree have the right to do so. According to Church law (Canon 1734, §2), they must do so **within 10 (ten) business days** of receiving notification of this decree. Any recourse must be submitted in writing via postal mail to Bishop Tobin by November 5, 2021 and must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

At this difficult time, I extend my prayerful support to all who worship at St. Benedict Church, which has been a true home and haven for the faithful.

Given in Providence,
at the Chancery,
this 18th of October 2021




Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Providence


(Rev.) Timothy D. Reilly
Chancellor