



Joseph Charles Bambera

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA
EPISCOPUS SCRANTONENSIS



DECREE

In the Name of God. Amen.

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Scranton's *Vision 2030: Creating Parish Communities Rooted in the Life of Jesus Christ*, a pastoral planning process addressing the long-range needs and challenges of the Diocese of Scranton, looks proactively at the realities of our local church in the present moment while striving to meet the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade, with the goal of creating vibrant parish communities rooted in the life of Jesus Christ, and;

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Peace Parish in Hazleton, a territorial parish located in the Diocese of Scranton, has the principal worship site Most Precious Blood Church, 131 East Fourth Street in Hazleton, and the secondary worship site Our Lady of Grace Church, 750 North Vine Street in Hazleton, and;

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Peace Parish was formed on July 1, 2025, from the consolidation of Most Precious Blood Parish (Most Precious Blood Church) and Queen of Heaven Parish (Our Lady of Grace Church), two Catholic parishes with churches founded in Hazleton more than a century ago by Italian immigrants, and;

WHEREAS, the demographics of Hazleton have changed dramatically, with the city now 63% Hispanic, and Our Lady of Peace Parish has a vibrant Hispanic community within the parish: 45 of 46 infants baptized in the parish last year were from Hispanic families, as were 4 of the 8 children who received First Communion and 14 of the 17 who received Confirmation, while 36 of 37 funerals were for English-speaking members, and;

WHEREAS, the number of households at Our Lady of Peace Parish from the English-speaking community has decreased by 54% over the last five years, and;

WHEREAS, the Hispanic community has grown so much in both size and vibrancy that the community has outgrown the space of both churches and is moving to their new home at Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish, where there is a larger church with more facilities for faith formation and other community gatherings, and;

WHEREAS, when the Hispanic community moves to its new home at Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish, parish life statistics reveal the Our Lady of Peace Parish needs can be met with the capacity of one worship site, and;

WHEREAS, a 2025 facility analysis conducted by an engineering firm estimates that more than \$4,000,000 in overall repairs and upgrades will be needed for both churches of Our Lady of Peace Parish: of this total, Our Lady of Grace Church will need \$2,486,700 in repairs over the next three years, and a total of \$3,620,200 in critical infrastructure repairs over the next ten years; and Most Precious Blood Church will need \$454,000 in critical infrastructure repairs over the next seven years, and;

WHEREAS, as of June 2025, at the time of entering into consolidation, Queen of Heaven Parish had approximately \$400,000 in its savings account. Declining revenues required the parish to transfer \$34,800 from savings to meet expenses in 2025, and for the current year the newly-consolidated Our Lady of Peace Parish is able to make expenses but does not have any margin for repair needs, and;

WHEREAS, paying for the estimated \$3,620,200 in critical infrastructure repairs for Our Lady of Grace Church would significantly affect parish finances adversely and would inhibit other critical repairs needed at Most Precious Blood Church, and;

WHEREAS, the Reverend Anthony J. Generose, J.C.L., Pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish, after extensive consultation with the members of the pastoral and finance councils and the parishioners of Our Lady of Peace Parish that resulted in a consensus to request the relegation to profane but not sordid use of Our Lady of Grace Church, has petitioned me for a relegation of Our Lady of Grace Church, and;

WHEREAS, I have determined the following:

- The requisite information required to make a just and equitable decision according to *CIC* c. 50 has been obtained, and;
- A grave cause exists, according to *CIC* c. 1222 §2, and;
- The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton has been heard and consulted, and;
- That the good of souls will not be injured nor will suffer any detriment.

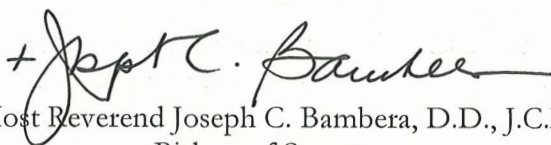
THEREFORE, I, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, having in mind my responsibility to best address the spiritual needs of the Christian Faithful of Our Lady of Peace Parish specifically and the needs of the Diocese of Scranton generally, and after invoking the Holy Spirit, I hereby decree the following:

- Our Lady of Grace Church, located at 750 North Vine Street, Hazleton, Pennsylvania, secondary church of Our Lady of Peace Parish, is hereby relegated to profane but not sordid use.

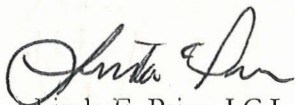
- This is to be published to the Pastor and the Parishioners of Our Lady of Peace Parish through notification in the Our Lady of Peace Parish bulletin on the weekend of June 13/14th 2026, and the decree is to be published on the diocesan website on June 13, .2026.
- On Sunday, August 2, 2026, the clergy and parishioners of Our Lady of Peace Parish will celebrate the closing Mass of Our Lady of Grace Church.

FURTHERMORE, should parishioners of Our Lady of Peace Parish decide to file recourse against this decree they are required *ad validitatem*, in light of the prescripts of *CIC* cc. 1732-1739, to submit a petition to the undersigned within ten useful days of the actual or presumed notification of this decree. Moreover, should recourse against this decree be lodged, suspensive effect happens *ipso iure*.

Given at the Chancery Building of the Diocese of Scranton on the 4th day of June in the Year of Our Lord, 2026.



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



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