



# 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**, Saint Patrick Parish, a territorial parish located in the Diocese of Scranton, has two worship sites: the principal church is Saint Patrick Church, 1403 Jackson Street in Scranton; the secondary church is Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (colloquially referred to as "Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel" or "IHM Chapel"), 1605 Oram Street in Scranton, and;

**WHEREAS**, from 2017 to 2025, the weekly Mass attendance overall at Saint Patrick Parish has decreased 44% (710 people to 395 people), with Mass attendance at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church specifically having decreased 66% (from 157 people with two Masses weekly to 54 people with one Mass weekly), and;

**WHEREAS**, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, which has always been a secondary worship site of Saint Patrick Parish, currently only has one regularly scheduled Mass each week, at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, and;

**WHEREAS**, from 2021 to 2025, the outstanding Diocesan and Catholic School Assessments of Saint Patrick Parish have grown from \$1.18 million to more than \$1.32 million, an overall increase of \$136,223 in five years; for the last two years Saint Patrick Parish has been operating at a true deficit even after relying on transferring money from savings in order to meet operational expenses; in 2025 Saint Patrick Parish had a true loss of \$79,682, in 2024 the parish had a true actual loss of \$102,292; and Saint Patrick Parish also carries a longstanding Diocesan loan with a current balance of \$1,123,000, and;

**WHEREAS**, the current annual cost to maintain Immaculate Heart of Mary Church is \$27,920, and with the Mass collection approximately \$24,000 a year, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church operates at a loss of nearly \$4,000 a year, and;

**WHEREAS**, there is approximately \$90,000 in deferred maintenance projects that will need to be addressed at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church site, including but not limited to: front entry stairs replacement (\$20,000); replacing front entrance doors to comply with Pennsylvania emergency regress requirements (\$10,000); and window framework (\$10,000), and;

**WHEREAS**, additionally, a new furnace at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church will be needed in the near future, with an estimated cost of approximately \$20,000, and;

**WHEREAS**, paying for the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church repairs and annual maintenance costs would significantly drain funds that cannot be afforded by Saint Patrick Parish, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend Richard E. Fox, Pastor of Saint Patrick Parish, after consultation with the members of the pastoral and finance councils of Saint Patrick Parish that resulted in a consensus to request the relegation to profane but not sordid use of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, has petitioned me for the relegation of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, and;

**WHEREAS**, I have determined the following:

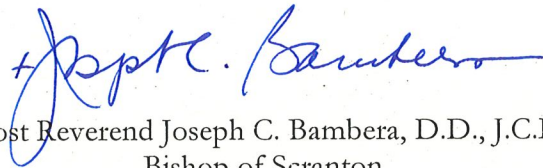
- The requisite information required to make a just and equitable decision according to *CIC* c. 50 has been obtained;
- A grave cause exists, according to *CIC* c. 1222 §2;
- The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton has been heard and consulted, and;
- That the good of souls will not be injured 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 Saint Patrick Parish specifically and the needs of the Diocese of Scranton generally, and after invoking the Holy Spirit and satisfying myself that the good of souls will suffer no detriment, I hereby decree the following:

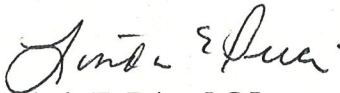
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, located at 1605 Oram Street, Scranton, Pennsylvania, the secondary worship site of Saint Patrick Parish, is hereby relegated to profane but not sordid use.
- This is to be published to the Pastor and the Parishioners of Saint Patrick Parish through notification in the Saint Patrick Parish bulletin on the weekend of June 13-14, 2026, and the decree is to be published on the diocesan website on June 13, 2026.
- On Saturday, June 27, 2026, the clergy and parishioners of Saint Patrick Parish will celebrate the closing Mass of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

**FURTHERMORE**, should parishioners of Saint Patrick 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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