



+June 20, 2023

Ms. Elizabeth Boylan-Nims  
3615 South J Street  
Tacoma, WA 98418

Dear Ms. Boylan-Nims:

I have received your letter of June 9, 2023 in which you petition for recourse against my decree of June 2, 2023 relegating Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in Tacoma to profane but not sordid use. Your letter reached me within the required 10 useful days from notification, in accordance with canon 1734 §2 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law (CIC)*.

My decision to relegate the church to profane use, in accordance with canon 1222, was done after genuine consultation with the leadership of Pope St. John XXIII Parish and with my Presbyteral Council. Father Tuan Nguyen, the pastor, wrote to me requesting the decree of relegation with the support of his finance council and pastoral council. Evaluating the facts for myself, I recognized that a grave cause exists indicating that the church should no longer be used for divine worship: the costs to repair and maintain the sacred building for worship are overwhelming.

You state in your letter that I have not allowed for alternative sources of funding for the repair and maintenance of the building. This is simply not true. Fr. Tuan, his leadership team, and members of the Chancery have discussed numerous funding strategies, including meeting with the Mayor of Tacoma, individual donors, various foundations, and of course the efforts of the local non-profit organization. Their endeavor began in 2019 and did not come close to the several million dollars necessary to repair the roof and make the church safe for occupancy. The church has stood these last few years unable to be used and without any significant and realistic means to reclaim the structure.

When presented with all these circumstances, my presbyteral council gave their unanimous support to the decree of relegation. They did so with the solemn realization that we are losing a beautiful house of worship in this archdiocese. This decision was truly difficult but, in my judgement, necessary due to the extremely serious state of the building and the reality that the new parish of Pope St. John XXIII has access to other worship spaces for the faithful.

For the reasons set forth above, I decline to withdraw or amend my decree.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and your fellow parishioners.

In the Heart of Christ,

Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL  
Archbishop of Seattle