



DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

**HIS EXCELLENCY
MOST REVEREND ROBERT D. GRUSS
By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SAGINAW**

**DECREE:
PERMANENT CLOSURE
OF SAINT HYACINTH CHURCH (Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish) BAY CITY,
MICHIGAN**

THE FACTS

Whereas, the church of Saint Hyacinth located at 1515 Cass Ave, Bay City, MI 48708 is one of the worship sites of Our Lady of Czestochowa, and has served the faithful for many years as a place of prayer, worship and sacramental life;

Whereas, The Most Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, then Bishop of Grand Rapids, MI, by written decree dated October 4, 1905, granted permission for the establishment of a new parish to be named Saint Hyacinth for the care of the souls among the faithful of Polish descendants residing south of 27th Street, Bay City, MI. The first church was solemnly consecrated by Bishop Richter on December 8, 1907;

Whereas, the cornerstone of the current church edifice was laid by the Most Reverend Stephen Woźnicki on October 8, 1950;

Whereas, by decree effective July 2014, the Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw, erected the parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa through the canonical merger of the parishes of Saint Stanislaus Kostka and Saint Hyacinth. Furthermore, Saint Hyacinth was designated as a church for additional use for the pastoral needs of the community;

Whereas, in recent years, the parish has experienced a sustained decline in active membership, resulting in decreased sacramental participation and diminished financial resources;

Whereas, a pastoral and financial review concluded that the continued maintenance and operation of Saint Hyacinth church site is no longer feasible and prudent;

Whereas, the parish Of Our Lady of Czestochowa is facing critical financial difficulties that include deficit spending for several years in large part due to trying to maintain two church campuses;

Whereas, the parish of Our Lady of Częstochowa has over \$1.1 million owed in debts and accounts payable;

THE LAW

Whereas, canons 515§2 and 87§1 support the diocesan bishop's authority to make decisions regarding parish structures and discipline for the spiritual welfare of the faithful;

Whereas, the diocesan bishop, in consultation with the presbyteral Council, may decide to suppress the use of a church as a place of worship for the spiritual well-being of the faithful, based on the circumstances of the parish community.

THE ARGUMENT

Whereas, the continued use of Saint Hyacinth is no longer justified by the current demographic and financial realities of the parish;

Whereas, the faithful of the parish will not be deprived of access to the sacraments and will be fully integrated into the liturgical and pastoral life of Our Lady of Częstochowa;

Whereas, the Parish has undergone a sustained decline in active membership, resulting in diminished participation and reduced financial capacity;

Whereas, this decline renders the continued operation of the two worship sites unsustainable;

Whereas, responsible stewardship, ecclesial unity, and pastoral effectiveness require the consolidation of parish resources and activity;

In light of these factors, it is deemed most responsible, both pastorally and financially, to consolidate parish resources and explore viable solutions to ensure the sustainability of the parish and its mission (can. 1222§1);

Wherefore:

1. Having carefully considered the law and the facts; and
2. Having heard the Presbyteral Council on August 27, 2024; and
3. Having heard on June 18, 2024, the Pastor and the Parish Pastoral and Finance Council of Our Lady of Częstochowa Parish, in whose territory the aforesaid property is situated; and
4. Having obtained on October 5th, 2024, the consent of those whose rights might be injured or violated, especially the major donors (or: the heirs of the major donor,), in accordance with the norm of canon 1222§2; and
5. Having ensured that the church will be stripped of its altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts; and

6. Having ensured the good of the souls will suffer no harm thereby; that is, the spiritual and pastoral good of the parishioners will continue as it has been provided by Our Lady of Czestochowa at St. Stanislaus church.
7. Having ensured that there would be no scandal resulting from closing the church permanently.

DECREE

I, The Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss, Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, by the authority granted to me in canon 515§2, and after consultation with the Presbyteral Council, do hereby pronounce, declare, and decree that the Saint Hyacinth church located at 1515 Cass Ave, Bay City, MI, is permanently closed effective at 12:01AM on May 28, 2025.

All sacred objects, furnishings, and liturgical items are to be treated in accordance with the diocesan norms and canon law. The property is no longer to be used for divine worship.

This decree is to be communicated to the Pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish Reverend Nicholas F. Coffaro who is the canonical representative of the Parish, according to the norm of law (c. 532).

Everything I have decreed must be observed in all its parts. Anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention, may not be carried out following the promulgation of this decree. I establish that it be promulgated by way of publication on the website of the Diocese of Saginaw and on the parish website of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

In accordance with canons 1734-1737, any party aggrieved by this decree has the right to petition for its revocation or amendment by hierarchical recourse within ten (10) canonical days of its legitimate notification.

Given on this 2nd day of May in the year of Our Lord 2025, at the chancery of the Diocese of Saginaw.



Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw



Reverend Alberto E. Vargas, JCL. JV.
Chancellor *pro-tem*