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**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA ANNOUNCES
RELEGATION OF WORSHIP SITES IN
THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA AND CHESTER COUNTY**Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church, Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church, and Saint Leo Church will no longer serve as worship sites of Our Lady of Hope Parish, Saint Joseph Parish, and Our Lady of Consolation Parish, respectively, and will no longer be designated as Roman Catholic churches.

***Contextual Background*Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish (Philadelphia)**In July 1993, Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish merged with Holy Child Parish, both located in North Philadelphia, forming the new Our Lady of Hope Parish.

At that time, the Our Lady of the Holy Souls church building became a worship site while the Holy Child church building was designated as the parish church. The worship site was made available for occasional liturgical use as is customary whenever possible in the case of a parish merger.

**Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish, Coatesville (Chester County)**In July 2012, Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish merged with Saint Joseph Parish, both located in Coatesville (Chester County), as part of the Parish Area Pastoral Planning Initiative that has been ongoing in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The parishes merged at the location and retained the name of Saint Joseph Parish. At that time, the Saint Stanislaus Kostka church building became a worship site of the newly formed Saint Joseph Parish and was available for the occasional celebration of Mass as well as funerals, weddings and baptisms as is customary whenever possible in the case of a parish merger.

Additional information regarding that merger can be found at the following link: <http://archphila.org/archdiocese-announces-initial-round-of-parish-mergers-resulting-from-pastoral-planning-initiative/>.

**Saint Leo Parish (Philadelphia)**In July 2013, Saint Leo Parish merged with Our Lady of Consolation Parish, both located in Northeast Philadelphia, as part of the Parish Area Pastoral Planning Initiative that has been ongoing in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The parishes merged at the location and retained the name of Our Lady of Consolation.

At that time, the Saint Leo church building became a worship site of the newly formed Our Lady of Consolation Parish and was available for the occasional celebration of Mass as well as funerals, weddings and baptisms as is customary whenever possible in the case of a parish merger.

Additional information regarding that merger can be found at the following link: <http://archphila.org/archdiocese-announces-parish-mergers-in-philadelphia-and-delaware-county-resulting-from-pastoral-planning-initiative/>.

***Today’s Announcements***Today, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia announced that Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. has approved the relegation of the Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church building, the Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church building, and the Saint Leo Churchbuilding to profane but not sordid use effective January 7, 2019. This formal, canonical designation means that these buildings will no longer serve as worship sites and will close as Roman Catholic churches.

This information was shared with Our Lady of Hope, Saint Joseph and Our Lady of Consolation Parishioners, respectively, at Masses during the course of this weekend. A copy of the official canonical decrees regarding this matter can be found at: <http://archphila.org/features/parish-planning-initiatives/>.

The formal request to close parish worship sites originated from the pastors of Our Lady of Hope Parish, Saint Joseph Parish, and Our Lady of Consolation Parish together with his parish pastoral and finance councils.  The request was then reviewed by the Archdiocesan Council of Priests and presented to Archbishop Chaput, who, after a careful review of all supporting factors, made the final decision.   **Additional Information

Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church Building (Philadelphia)**

When Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish merged with Holy Child Parish to form Our Lady of Hope, all real estate holdings, assets and debts of the former Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish were transferred to the newly formed Our Lady of Hope Parish. These transfers are standard procedure in the case of all parish mergers.

As such, the former Our Lady of the Holy Souls church building is the property of Our Lady of Hope Parish.  The future disposition of this building will be determined by the pastor of Our Lady of Hope Parish in consultation with his parish pastoral and finance councils in a manner consistent with providing for parish viability and sustainability.

Our Lady of Hope Parish has striven to maintain the Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church building in good repair. However, the costs associated with ongoing and deferred maintenance for the properties of the former Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish have placed a significant financial strain upon Our Lady of Hope Parish.

Our Lady of Hope Parish is one of the poorest in the Archdiocese. Furthermore, the parish’s income is expected to drop by over $290,000 in fiscal year 2019-2020, when the Cristo Rey High School vacates the former Holy Child Parish School. At the conclusion of the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Our Lady of Hope Parish maintained a debt of approximately $460,000. The buildings currently used by Our Lady of Hope Parish require significant long-term repairs which cannot be addressed as available funds are required for immediately-needed repairs. As a result, Our Lady of Hope Parish is not capable of covering the recommended repairs for Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church, which are currently estimated to be $160,000.

**Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church Building, Coatesville (Chester County)**When Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish merged with Saint Joseph Parish, all real estate holdings, assets and debts of the former Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish were transferred to the newly formed Saint Joseph Parish. These transfers are standard procedure in the case of all parish mergers.

As such, the former Saint Stanislaus Kostka church building is the property of Saint Joseph Parish.  The future disposition of this building will be determined by the pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in consultation with his parish pastoral and finance councils in a manner consistent with providing for parish viability and sustainability.

Saint Joseph Parish has striven to maintain the Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church building in good repair. However, the costs associated with ongoing and deferred maintenance for the properties of the former Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish have placed a significant financial strain upon Saint Joseph Parish.

For the fiscal year 2016-2017, Saint Joseph Parish spent $26,010.75 on maintenance for Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church and its associated buildings. In February 2018, Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church and its former rectory required repairs to fix multiple water leaks. This work alone cost $6,240.00. At that time it was discovered that additional work was needed to replace water and drain lines. As the aforementioned repairs were being carried out, it was discovered that the boiler in Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church was no longer functional and needed to be replaced at an estimated cost of $30,000.00.

Continuing deterioration of these buildings is expected to place more financial strain on the parish. Furthermore, Saint Joseph Parish experienced a deficit of $42,024.35 in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Because of the financial burdens being experienced by Saint Joseph Parish as well as the fact that Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church is underutilized, it is believed that the possible eventual sale of the properties formerly owned by Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish would be best for the current and future vitality of Saint Joseph Parish.

**Saint Leo Church Building (Philadelphia)**When Saint Leo Parish merged with Our Lady of Consolation Parish, all real estate holdings, assets and debts of the former Saint Leo Parish were transferred to the newly formed Our Lady of Consolation Parish. These transfers are standard procedure in the case of all parish mergers.

As such, the former Saint Leo church building is the property of Our Lady of Consolation Parish.  The future disposition of this building will be determined by the pastor of Our Lady of Consolation Parish in consultation with his parish pastoral and finance councils in a manner consistent with providing for parish viability and sustainability.

Our Lady of Consolation Parish has striven to maintain the Saint Leo Church building in good repair. However, the costs associated with ongoing and deferred maintenance for the properties of the former Saint Leo Parish have placed a significant financial strain upon Our Lady of Consolation Parish.

The cost for maintaining Saint Leo Church in the 2016-2017 fiscal year was $44,531.00; during the same period, Our Lady of Consolation Parish experienced a deficit of $158,048.00. Our Lady of Consolation Parish also had a debt of $284,085.00 as of June 30, 2018.

Saint Leo Church will also require plumbing repairs in order to be functional and those repairs are beyond the financial means of Our Lady of Consolation Parish. Because of these financial burdens currently being experienced by Our Lady of Consolation Parish, it is believed that the possible eventual sale of the Saint Leo Church property would be best for the current and future financial stability of Our Lady of Consolation Parish.

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**Editor’s Note:**For comprehensive information regarding Parish Area Pastoral Planning in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, please visit <http://archphila.org/features/parish-planning-initiatives/> .