



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 24, 2023

Reverend John Echert
Church of the Holy Trinity
749 6th Avenue South
South St. Paul, MN 55075

Dear Father Echert,

I have received and reviewed your letter dated March 10, 2023, in which you formally request that the status of the Church of Saint Augustine in South Saint Paul, Minnesota, be changed to that of an oratory. I appreciate the thoughtfulness you have been demonstrated in discerning and presenting this petition, in particular, the communication and dialogue that you have had with your parishioners. Enclosed please find a decree enacting this change of status. I encourage you to share this letter and decree with your parishioners so they are aware of this modification. If for some reason, anyone finds themselves aggrieved by this decision, I would ask that you kindly inform them that canonical recourse may be pursued within ten days from the notification of the decree (can. 1734 §2).

Given the longstanding tradition of the use of the *Missale Romanum* (Editio typica 1962) at the Oratory of Saint Augustine, and given that this practice has long attracted a group of the faithful who are attached to this form of the liturgy, your plan to continue to use Saint Augustine for Masses celebrated in the *usus antiquior* is appropriate and seems to be fitting for your unique community. I ask that you take particular care to respect the directives of the Holy Father's *motu proprio Traditionis custodes*, and the *Responsa ad dubia* issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship. I call attention in particular, to the expectations of accompanying those who regularly participate in the liturgies at Saint Augustine towards a full understanding of the value of the celebration in the ritual form given to us by the reform of the Second Vatican Council, and exhorting them to assist at Masses in the current liturgical rite at least on occasion.

Father Echert, thank you for your leadership at for the parish of Holy Trinity and your care for those who will worship at the Oratory of Saint Augustine.

With every personal good wish and prayer, I remain

Fraternally in Christ,



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Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Rev. John Echert
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ENCLOSURE

cc: Most Reverend Michael J. Izen, Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar General
Most Reverend Joseph A. Williams, Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar General
Very Reverend Charles V. Lachowitzer, Vicar General
Very Reverend Michael M. Tix, Vicar General
Reverend Thomas Margevičius, Director of the Office of Worship
Deacon Steve Maier, Director of Parish Services
Dr. Susan Mulheron, Chancellor for Canonical Affairs



DECREE

DESIGNATION OF AN ORATORY

Whereas the pastor of the parish of the Church of the Holy Trinity in South Saint Paul, Minnesota, has presented a petition for the edifice titled the Church of Saint Augustine, located in South Saint Paul, Minnesota, within the territory of the aforesaid parish to be canonically designated as an Oratory, for the expressed purpose that the canonical status of the edifice would align with the reality of its pastoral use by the parish; and

Considering that since the 2010 extinctive union of the parishes of the Church of the Holy Trinity and the Church of Saint Augustine, the territorial parish has had another church designated for primary use as the parish church, namely, the Church of the Holy Trinity, also located in South Saint Paul, Minnesota, and;

Noting that the petition was presented with the support of parish leadership, including the members of its pastoral council and lay trustees; and

After consultation with the Presbyteral Council (1983 *CIC* can. 515 §2), which yielded unanimous support for the change in status;

Having determined that the good of souls will not suffer harm as a result of a change in status of the edifice;

I, the undersigned Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, hereby establish

THE CHURCH OF SAINT AUGUSTINE IN SOUTH SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

As an oratory according to the provisions of canons 1223-1225 and 1229 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

The oratory of Saint Augustine will remain designated as a sacred space set aside for divine worship. As such, it is subject to the relevant rights and obligations as articulated in canons 1205-1243. It retains its canonical title and patron, which is to be commemorated through liturgical celebrations at the site, along with other liturgical and sacramental celebrations as requested by the community, with the approval of the Pastor.

Given at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 24th day of April, the Commemoration of the Conversion of Saint Augustine, in the year of Our Lord 2023.

Susan Mulheron
Chancellor for Canonical Affairs

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

L.S.