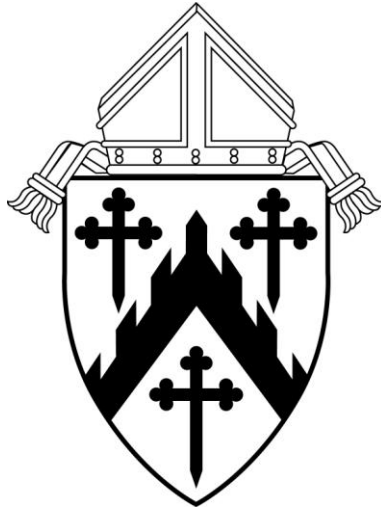


DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT



Policies Relating to the Modification of Parishes and the Closure of Churches

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Policy promulgated at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Davenport—effective January 12, 2014
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Bishop of Davenport

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§IV- 1010 POLICIES RELATING TO THE MODIFICATION OF PARISHES AND THE CLOSURE OF CHURCHES

Introduction

Canon 515

§1. A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. §2. The diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress or alter parishes, he is not to erect, suppress or notably alter them without hearing the presbyteral council. §3. A legitimately erected parish has juridic personality by the law itself.

The modification of parishes (cf. c. 515 §2) and the closure, relegation, and alienation of churches (cf. c. 1222 §2) are among the responsibilities that fall to diocesan Bishops. In exercising these responsibilities, Bishops are to be guided by the Church's jurisprudence.

As the Congregation for the Clergy notes in the letter accompanying their "Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes and the Closure, Relegation and Alienation of Churches"¹ [hereafter, "Letter" and "Procedural Guidelines"], it is important to distinguish "between three separate and distinct canonical processes: (1) the modification of parishes, (2) the relegation to profane use and/or the permanent closure of churches, and (3) the alienation of current or former sacred edifices" (p. 212). Each of these processes must be adjudicated individually; the "just cause" that may lead to the modification of a parish and the "grave cause" that may lead to the closure or relegation of a church must be considered separately and specifically for the parish and church involved. In addition, they note that in this process it is important to "distinguish the juridic person of a diocese from the juridic person of a parish" (p. 212). Finally, they also remind Bishops that each of these decisions must be "enacted by a separate written decree" that follows the norms of canon law.

This policy, along with the diocesan Policies Relating to Art and Architecture for Worship, replace the 2004 document, "Directives: Management of Assets."

Abbreviations Used:

BLS	<i>Built of Living Stones (USCCB, 2000)</i>
c. / cc.	<i>canon(s) (From the 1983 Code of Canon Law)</i>

¹ Published in *The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry*, Volume 73, Number 1, 2013, pp. 211-219.

§IV-1011 Modification of Parishes

IV-1011 Policy

1. The relevant canons are chiefly c. 515, but also cc. 50-51, 120-123, 127, and 166.
2. There are four possible types of parish modifications:
 - a. Extinctive Union (merger): A and B unite to form C, only C remains (c. 121)
 - b. Extinctive Union (amalgamation): A is subsumed into B, only B remains (c. 121)
 - c. Total Division: A is divided into B and C, only B and C remain (c. 122)
 - d. Suppression: A is extinguished; nothing remains (c. 123)
3. As a general rule, territorial parishes may only be united or divided (a-c). These are “last choices” and other remedies should be considered first.
4. The authority competent to erect, suppress, or notably alter parishes is the diocesan Bishop or those equivalent to him in law (cc. 381 §2, 368, and 515 §2). He is competent to judge the existence of the required just cause, following the norms of jurisprudence.
5. The principle motivation for modifying a parish is always concern for souls (*Christus Dominus* #32) and the good of the faithful (*Apostolorum Successores* #214).
6. While the good of the whole diocese may be taken into consideration, the reasons for undertaking the modification of a parish must be specific and relevant to that parish.

Procedures

1. The Bishop has the responsibility of seeking out all necessary information and hearing from those whose rights could be injured (c. 50).
2. The Bishop must consult the Presbyteral Council
 - a. He must provide the Council with all the relevant information
 - b. He must lawfully convoke the Council (cc. 127, 166)
 - c. He himself must consult the members regarding each individual parish modification which has been proposed
 - d. The consultation must be genuine and include reasons both for and against the modification
3. Any decree modifying a parish must be issued in writing
 - a. It must be communicated, without delay, according to the norms of law
 - b. The period of time during which hierarchical recourse may be presented begins with the lawful notification of the decree (c. 1734 §2)
 - c. The decree must mention at least in summary form the just cause(s) for the decision (c. 51)
 - d. The decree must clearly define the criteria for membership in all parishes affected by the modification
 - e. The decree must provide for the disposition of temporal goods in accord with law, and must respect the intentions of donors (cc. 121-123); temporal goods are to follow the people.
 - i. “When two or more parishes are joined to form one parish, the temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to the original parishes are obtained by the new parish, together with all the obligations with which they were burdened (c. 121).”²
 - ii. If a parish is divided, “an equitable and just division is made of the original parish’s common and divisible patrimonial goods and rights, together with its debts and obligations,” taking into

² Robert W. Oliver, “Temporal Goods and the Suppression/Merger of Parishes,” in *The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry* 72:1 (2012), 167-8.

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account “the circumstances and needs of the parish to which the portion is assigned or of the new parish that is created.” “The use and usufruct of common goods which are not divisible accrue to each parish.”³

- f. If a parish is suppressed, the norms for mergers (3.e.i) apply; that is, “the temporal goods are to remain with the parish or parishes to which the Christian faithful are assigned.”⁴

§IV-1012 Closure of Churches & Relegation of Churches to Profane but Not Sordid Use

IV-1012 Policy

1. The relevant canons are chiefly cc. 1214 and 1222, and also cc. 50-51, 127, and 166.
2. A sacred edifice which has been given over perpetually for divine worship should retain that sacred character if at all possible; only a grave reason to the contrary is sufficient to justify relegating a church to profane but not sordid use (c. 1222 §2).
3. Altars do not lose their dedication or blessing when the church does (see *Diocesan Policies Relating to Art and Architecture for Worship*, section IV-1007).
4. To close a church permanently is to relegate it to profane use; in this case, the norms for relegation must be followed.
5. The authority competent to relegate a church to profane but not sordid use is the diocesan Bishop or those equivalent to him in law (cc. 381 §2, 368, and 515 §2). He is competent to judge the existence of the required grave cause, following the norms of jurisprudence.
 - a. Regarding finances:
 - i. The relevant financial need to be considered is only that of the juridic person which owns the church (i.e., the parish and not the diocese)
 - ii. All other reasonable sources of funding or assistance have been considered and found lacking or inadequate
 - b. The following are *not*, by themselves, sufficiently grave causes:
 - i. A general plan of the diocese to reduce the number of churches
 - ii. The church is no longer needed
 - iii. The parish has been suppressed [or merged]
 - iv. The number of parishioners has decreased
 - v. Closure will not harm the good of souls
 - vi. A desire to promote the unity of the parish
 - vii. Some potential future cause that has not actually happened yet

Procedures

1. The Bishop has the responsibility of seeking out all necessary information and hearing from those whose rights could be injured (c. 50).
2. The Bishop must consult the Presbyteral Council
 - a. He must provide the Council with all the relevant information
 - b. He must lawfully convoke the Council (cc. 127, 166)

³ Oliver, 168. For example, a cemetery would not be divided between parishes but would be transferred to one; any assets (or liabilities) related to the cemetery would accompany it.

⁴ Oliver, 170. Specifically, it is not permitted to transfer funds to other entities, such as the diocese.

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- c. He himself must consult the members regarding each individual relegation which has been proposed
 - d. The consultation must be genuine and include reasons both for and against the proposed relegation
 - e. He must obtain the consent of those who claim legitimate rights in the edifice and verify that the good of souls will suffer no harm (cc. 1222 §2, and 127).
3. Any decree modifying a parish must be issued in writing
 - a. It must be communicated, without delay, according to the norms of law
 - b. The period of time during which hierarchical recourse may be presented begins with the lawful notification of the decree (c. 1734 §2)
 - c. The decree must mention at least in summary form the grave cause(s) for the decision (c. 51)

§IV-1013 Alienation of Churches

IV-1013 Policy

1. The relevant canons are chiefly cc. 1291-1298, and also cc. 50-51, 127, and 166.
 - a. These canons apply to the actual sale of an edifice
 - b. They also apply to other transactions which could harm the stable patrimony of the juridic person which owns it (c. 1295).
2. Relegation to profane but not sordid use
 - a. If after alienation the edifice will still be used for Catholic worship, it is not relegated to profane use prior to alienation
 - b. In all other cases, it must be so relegated prior to alienation
3. If alienation becomes necessary, the following options are available (in decreasing order of preference):
 - a. Continued use as a place of Catholic worship (non-relegated; see 2a above)
 - b. Use as a place for the exercise of other Catholic apostolates or ministries
 - c. For profane but not sordid use in keeping with the dignity of the edifice as a former church
 - d. Demolition of the edifice, recovering the land

Procedures

1. The competent authority must assure that there is no reasonable possibility of scandal or loss of the faithful which will result from the alienation.
2. Under no circumstances may the edifice be alienated for use inconsistent with its inherent dignity as a former church. Contractual agreements are to be put in place to safeguard this point in civil law as well as canonically.
3. Prior to alienation, all sacred objects, relics, sacred furnishings, stained-glass windows, bells, confessionals, altars, etc. are to be removed for use in other sacred edifices or stored in ecclesiastical custody.
 - a. If they cannot be removed, altars are to be relegated to be destroyed.
 - b. See *Diocesan Policies Relating to Art and Architecture for Worship*, section IV-1007 (excerpted below in Appendix B).
4. Competent authority
 - a. For juridic persons not subject to the Bishop, the competent authority is identified by the statutes.
 - b. In all other cases (parishes, schools, chapels, etc.), the competent authority is the diocesan Bishop, who is required to obtain the following consents:
 - i. The consent of the diocesan Finance Council is required.
 - ii. The consent of the College of Consultors is required.

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- iii. The consent of the interested parties is required. This is documented through the enactment of a Corporate Resolution.
5. Value of the edifice: additional requirements
 - a. When the value of the edifice lies between the minimum and maximum amounts established by the USCCB:
 - i. Currently, the minimum amount is \$250,000 and the maximum amount is \$3,500,000 in the Diocese of Davenport⁵
 - ii. A just cause for alienation is required.
 - iii. A written appraisal by experts is required (c. 1293).
 - b. When the value of the edifice lies beneath the minimum amount established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), all the requirements above apply, except that a written appraisal by experts is not required.
 - c. When the value of the edifice lies above the maximum amount established by the USCCB OR if the edifice was given by vow OR it is precious for artistic or historical reasons, in addition to all the requirements above, the consent of the Holy See is required (c. 1292 §2).

§IV-1014 Parish Cemeteries

IV-1014 Policy

1. Parish cemeteries (including their assets, liabilities, and records) are to be transferred as follows:
 - a. Extinctive Union (merger): to the new parish
 - b. Extinctive Union (amalgamation): to the new parish
 - c. Total Division: to one of the parishes receiving parishioners, as determined by decree
 - d. Suppression: to a new parish, as determined by decree
2. The cemetery may not be incorporated as a separate entity or otherwise alienated from ecclesiastical care.

Procedures

1. The decree modifying the parish must account for the care of the cemetery and the transfer of its assets, liabilities, and records.

⁵ USCCB, Complementary Norms to Canon Law, canon 1292 §1. Available at: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/canon-law/complementary-norms/canon-1292-1-minimum-and-maximum-sums-alienation-of-church-property.cfm>.

APPENDIX A: Practical Issues⁶

This appendix lists the various tasks that an administrator must attend to in the event that a parish is modified (most commonly, a form of extinctive union). While extensive, it is not exhaustive. The bottom line is that all assets and liabilities of a parish need to be accounted for when that parish is modified.

As noted in the policies above, the general rule is that parish assets follow the people. It is not permitted to transfer assets to a superior entity (such as the diocese).

Compile a complete list of assets and liabilities (for the parish and parish organizations):

- Checking, savings, investment, brokerage
- Endowments, foundations, annual appeal, capital campaign
- Accounts receivable
- Outstanding checks, unpaid bills, credit cards
- Vendor service contracts, charge accounts
- Equipment or vehicles that parish is leasing
- Worker's compensation
- List of gifts, bequests of real property, and donations received up to the date of merger
- Annual budget
- Detailed inventory of the parish's temporal goods
- List of all those having keys to the buildings (or collect and turn over the keys)

Transfer assets and liabilities:

- The following are to be obtained by the administrator of the new entity:
 - Power of attorney for the pastor of the closing parish
 - Federal employment identification number (FEIN) of the closing parish
 - Tax-exempt documentation of the closing parish and related entities
- Change the former parish institution numbers (ex: FEIN) to the new parish institution numbers, carefully noting the name of each bank or investment institution, account number, account signer(s) and current balances.
- The new numbers are also applied, as applicable, to buildings, insurance coverage, and worker's compensation subsequent to the merger date.
- Contact the county treasurer/recorder to have the deed transferred or abstract updated (including the deed for the cemetery, if applicable).

Transfer parish records to the new (receiving) parish(es):

- Sacramental records
- Mass intentions
- Historical records
- Cemetery records

Transfer of temporal goods:

- Objects are not to be damaged and appropriate insurance coverage is to be arranged if applicable
- Sacred objects are to be transferred to the new entity/ies (or other appropriate disposition made in accord with *Diocesan Policies Relating to Art and Architecture for Worship*, section IV-1007).

⁶ Oliver, 173-77.

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Finances:

- Repay all debts (capital and interest) in a timely manner [the competent authority may grant an exception to retain some debt if necessary].
- Attempt to contact all those who have not cashed outstanding checks, informing them that the parish accounts will be closed as of the merger date.
- The balance on charge and credit card accounts is paid in full and the account(s) closed prior to the merger date. Confirmation of the closure is retained as part of the records. If a new parish is being formed then new accounts are opened using the new parish name, address, and tax ID number.

Employees:

- Employees are to be paid to the date of merger.
- Provide the new parish(es) with employee records, including: name, address, date of hire, rate of pay, salary, Social Security number, hours worked per week, employee benefits, accrued and unused vacation days, retirement plan, insurance (life, disability, health, dental), last day of work, and severance information where applicable.

Contracts and Other Arrangements:

- Organizations that use buildings for meetings without a formal agreement are notified in writing that the parish is merging and which buildings will be available for them to use (if any).
- List the equipment and/or vehicles that the closing parish is leasing and/or renting from a vendor and notify the leasing or rental company in writing that the parish is merging.
 - If the new parish is to continue the agreement, the vendor is notified of the new parish's name, address, contact information, and tax ID number.
 - If not, then the closing parish terminates the lease agreements and pays any costs thereby incurred. Confirmation of termination is documented and kept as part of the records transferred to the new parish, including the return date of the equipment/vehicle. The license plate(s) for the parish-owned vehicle is returned to the Registry of Motor Vehicles and a cancellation of registration certificate received. A copy is sent to the insurance department at the chancery to initiate cancellation of insurance.
- Memberships and subscriptions
 - Notification is sent to vendors to cancel memberships and or subscriptions that will not be retained; confirmation of cancellation is retained.
 - If memberships / subscriptions are to be maintained by the new parish, the vendor is notified in writing that the parish is merging and is provided with the new parish's name, address, contact information, and tax ID number.
- Service contracts (ex: bulletin and envelope companies, website hosts)
 - If the contract is to continue, vendors are notified in writing that the parish is merging, providing the new parish name, address, contact information, and tax ID number.
 - If not, arrangements are made to discontinue the service, with confirmation from the vendor that the service will end on a specific date.
 - Service contracts or agreements normally do not include utilities, alarm systems, telephone lines, landscaping and snowplowing services; these are usually consolidated under the new parish if applicable. If the site is to be alienated and/or the edifice demolished, these services will need to be terminated as well.

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Legal Issues

- Potential canonical and civil liability issues are determined and any outstanding lawsuits are disclosed and addressed.
- Final tax reports, including W-2s for employees and Form 1099s for vendors and independent contractors, are prepared.
- If applicable, the state lottery/gambling commission is notified of the parish merging in writing, providing the new parish name and tax ID number. Any necessary filings, including tax forms issued for winnings, are completed and any taxes or fees due are paid. Any fees due to parish organizations are transferred to a new parish account if drawings are to continue.

APPENDIX B: §IV-1007 Disposition of Objects No Longer Needed for Sacred Use

Over time, there will be liturgical objects in churches, chapels, and other religious institutions that become unsuitable or no longer necessary for sacred use because:

- *They are worn out and beyond restoration;*
- *They are of good quality but no longer appropriate for the Vatican II liturgy;*
- *There are duplicates due to the merging of parishes;*
- *A new object is created as a result of a renovation or new building project; and/or*
- *A parish, church, or chapel is closed or suppressed.*

These objects need to be treated with “reverence and not be employed for improper or profane use even if they are under the control of private individuals” (c.1171)... An assessment of the quality of an object (fine materials, excellent craftsmanship, historical significance, aesthetic beauty) is critical in determining any disposition, and ought to be done with the help of experts if necessary.

IV-1007.1 Policy

The pastoral leadership of each parish is responsible for the proper disposition of object no longer needed or suitable for liturgical use (cc.1279-80; 1291).

Procedures

- a) In the alienating of any Church property, the provisions of canon law are to be followed; see especially Book V, “The Temporal Goods of the Church.” Particular canons of note are found below.
- b) According to c. 1292, permission is required for the alienation (sale) of goods whose value exceeds particular limits. The current limit amounts for requiring the approval of the Diocesan Bishop (“minimum”) and the Holy See (“maximum”) are found on the USCCB website under “Complementary Norms for Canon 1291 §1.” See above (p. 6 note 5).
- c) Objects acquired as the result of a vow, and objects of great artistic or historical value, may not be alienated (sold) without the permission of the Holy See. When such objects are to be disposed of, the diocesan bishop is to be contacted (cc.638 & 1292 §2; and BLS §168).
- d) The pastor (or Parish Life Administrator) is to keep an accurate list of alienated objects and the manner of their disposition. This list is to remain a part of parish records.
- e) The transfer and reception of any object is to be documented using the form below.

IV-1007.2 Policy

The disposition of particular objects is governed by category as well as by the preference given to certain methods of disposition over others.

Procedures

- a) When an object is deemed no longer suited to or needed for liturgical use, it is categorized in accord with the schema laid out in the table below.
- b) In order of preference, objects no longer suitable or needed for liturgical or sacred use are to be disposed of in the following manners (and in keeping with canonical legislation):
 - a. **Re-using Objects**
First consideration should be given to incorporating historical objects in new constructions or renovations. For example, a stained glass window might be incorporated into a new reservation chapel. The Liturgy Office, liturgical consultant, and architect should be consulted to help determine the appropriateness of re-use.
 - b. **Donation / Sale to Another Church**
If it is not possible to reuse the object in question, the parish may make those objects available to another parish, chapel, or institution in the diocese, or to a mission church or other parish in great need. Both institutions should contact the Liturgy Office to approve the transfer.
 - c. **Placement in a “Heritage Room”**
Objects may be placed in a Heritage Room designed by the parish or institution to document its history.
 - d. **Return of Objects to Donor or Family Member**
While it is true that donated objects become the property of the receiving parish or institution, it is important to be sensitive to donors and parishioners when it comes time to dispose of certain items. It may sometimes be pastorally appropriate to return an object to the donor or a family member.
 - e. **Donation / Sale to a Museum**
Rare or historically significant objects which are no longer usable in any way may be donated or sold to a reputable museum (with the approval of the Diocesan Liturgy Office).
 - f. **Sale to Parishioners / Individuals**
Respecting the restrictions in this policy, there are occasions when—other solutions having been deemed not feasible—that objects may be sold to parishioners or other individuals.
 - g. **Storage**
Objects may be documented and properly stored to protect them from future damage. The Diocesan Archivist will serve as the point of contact and clearinghouse for information regarding proper storage and available resources.
 - h. **Destruction**
If an object is no longer usable, it may be disposed of by burning (or another method that destroys the objects integrity) or by burial (not simple disposal or relegation to a dump or landfill). Such objects are then no longer considered sacred or “blessed.”
- c) Churches (cc. 1212, 1222) which are no longer to be used for sacred purposes must be returned to profane use by decree of the diocesan bishop before they can be transferred to non-liturgical use. By extension of c. 1212, it is preferable and more respectful that chalices, patens, and other blessed objects also be returned to profane use by decree before disposition if they will no longer be used for sacred purposes. Altars may not normally be reduced to profane use by decree, except prior to destruction (c. 1239; see table below for specifics).

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- d) When considering the disposition of a work of fine art, every effort should be made to restore and preserve the object, or at least protect it from future decay. It may also be useful to discern whether an object is worthy because of its intrinsic artistic, historic, and/or sentimental value. Consultation with art experts is suggested.
- e) The utmost care and respect is to be paid to relics. If they are not able to be safeguarded in a worthy manner at a parish or institution, they are to be transferred to the diocese (or to another church). As part of the sacred heritage of the Church, relics may not be sold or transferred to an individual.
- f) The Office of Liturgy may be contacted for the names of museums or agencies that assist with the transfer of sacred items to the missions or other churches.

Canons Relevant to the Care and Disposition of Sacred Items

Canon 638

§1. It is for proper law, within the scope of universal law, to determine acts which exceed the limit and manner of ordinary administration and to determine those things which are necessary to place an act of extraordinary administration validly.

§2. Besides superiors, officials who are designated for this purpose in the proper law can validly incur expenses and perform juridic acts of ordinary administration within the limits of their office.

§3. For validity of alienation and any other business transaction in which the patrimonial condition of a juridic person can be affected adversely, there is required the written permission of the competent superior with the consent of the council. If, moreover, it concerns a business transaction which exceeds the highest amount defined for a given region by the Holy See, or items given to the Church in virtue of a vow, or items of precious art or of historical value, the permission of the Holy See is also required.

§4. For the autonomous monasteries mentioned in can. 615 and for institutes of diocesan right it is additionally necessary to have the written consent of the local ordinary.

Canon 1171

Sacred things which are destined for divine worship through dedication or a blessing are to be treated with reverence and not be employed for improper or profane use even if they are under the control of private individuals.

Canon 1190

§1. It is absolutely forbidden to sell sacred relics.

§2. Significant relics or other ones which are honored with great veneration by the people cannot in any manner be validly alienated or perpetually transferred without the permission of the Apostolic See.

§3. The prescription of §2 is also applicable to images in any church which are honored with great veneration by the people.

Canon 1212

Sacred places lose their dedication or blessing if they suffer major destruction or if they have been permanently given over to profane uses, de facto or through a decree of the competent ordinary.

Canon 1222

§1. If a church can in no way be employed for divine worship and it is impossible to repair it, it can be relegated to profane but not sordid use by the diocesan bishop.

§2. Where other serious reasons suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship the diocesan bishop, after hearing the presbyteral council, can relegate it to profane but not sordid use with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights regarding the church and as long as the good of souls is not thereby impaired.

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Canon 1238

§1. An altar loses its dedication or blessing according to the norm of can. 1212.

§2. Altars, be they fixed or movable, do not lose their dedication or blessing through the reduction of a church or other sacred place to profane uses.

Canon 1239

§1. Both a fixed and a movable altar are to be reserved exclusively for divine worship and entirely exempt from profane use.

Canon 1269

If sacred objects are privately owned, they may be acquired even by private persons by means of prescription; but it is not lawful to employ them for profane uses unless they have lost their dedication or blessing; if, however, they belong to a public ecclesiastical juridic person, they can be acquired only by another public ecclesiastical juridic person.

Canon 1292

§1. With due regard for the prescription of can. 638, §3, when the value of the goods whose alienation is proposed is within the range of the minimum and maximum amounts which are to be determined by the conference of bishops for its region, the competent authority is determined in the group's own statutes when it is a question of juridic persons who are not subject to the diocesan bishop; otherwise, the competent authority is the diocesan bishop with the consent of the finance council, the college of consultors and the parties concerned.

§2. The permission of the Holy See is also required for valid alienation when it is a case of goods whose value exceeds the maximum amount, goods donated to the Church through a vow or goods which are especially valuable due to their artistic or historical value.

§3. If the object to be alienated is divisible, the parts which have previously been alienated must be mentioned in seeking the permission for alienation; otherwise the permission is invalid.

§4. The persons who must take part in alienating goods through their advice or consent are not to give their advice or consent unless they have first been thoroughly informed concerning the economic situation of the juridic person whose goods are proposed for alienation and concerning previous alienations.

Canon 1376

One who profanes a movable or immovable sacred thing is to be punished with a just penalty.

Transfer Document

Object Being Transferred: _____

Description: _____

Declaration:

The ownership of the object named and described above

was transferred from _____

Name of parish/institution making transfer

by the authority of _____

Name of person representing parish/institution making the transfer

to _____, and was received by

Name of parish/institution making transfer

_____ on the date specified below.

Name of person representing parish/institution receiving the transfer

The receiving institution declares that the item will not be used in any sordid or unbecoming way.

Signature of person representing the parish or
institution making the transfer

Signature of person representing the parish or
institution receiving the transfer

Date

Date

The original of this form is to be retained in the parish/institution archives. If the object transferred is of significant historical, artistic, or material value, and/or of the permission of the bishop was required to alienate the object, a copy of this form is to be sent to the Diocesan Archives.

Table—The Disposition of Objects No Longer Needed for Sacred Use

Options (in general order of preference): ↓	Altar (1,2)	Relics (including altar stones [2])	Chalice; Paten; Tabernacle; Monstrance	Furnishings (4)	Ritual Books; Pews, Communion Rails, Kneelers, Reredos.	Artwork (5); Candelabra; Thurible
Reuse in Renovation (intact or modified)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Place in heritage room or archive	X	X	X	X	X	X
Return to donor	No	No	No	No	No	X
Donate [or sell (6)] to another Catholic church or chapel (incl. private chapel established in keeping with the law)	X	X Or transfer to the Diocesan Archives	X	X	X	X
Donate or sell to a museum (6,7)	No	No	No	No	X	X
May be sold or given to an individual or a non-Catholic church (6,7)	No	No	To another Catholic priest only (3)	No	X	X
Storage (in Church custody)	X	X	X	X	X	X
“Return to profane use” by decree (c.1212)	No	N/A	Blessed object ought to be returned to profane use by decree before disposition or destruction, even though destruction or the act of returning these objects to profane use itself cause the objects to lose their dedication or blessing <i>de facto</i> .			
Destruction (bury, burn)	X	X	X	X	X	X

- (1) An altar may not be sold. An altar may not be relegated to profane use (c. 1239); though it does lose its blessing/dedication if it is destroyed (cc. 1212, 1238). If an altar is transferred to another Catholic church to be used as an altar, it does not need to be rededicated or blessed (*Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Chapter V, §22). If the altar cannot be removed from a church that has been reduced to profane status, it must be destroyed (after first having its blessing/dedication lost by decree). The altar stone / relics are to be removed and stored appropriately.
- (2) Relics may not be sold (c. 1190).
- (3) For example, to one newly ordained.
- (4) For example, Ambo, Ambry, Chair, Confessionals, Font, Bells, Processional Cross, Stained Glass, Linens
- (5) For example, icons, statues, Stations of the Cross.
- (6) When selling an item, care should be taken that it would not subsequently be used for sordid purposes. Therefore, open auction with no way of controlling who is bidding or why would be an unsuitable means for selling sacred objects. To the extent possible, sales should be conditioned to prevent unseemly use of sacred items. Even though the blessing or consecration of the item is lost by sale, the fact that the item was once used in divine worship requires that it still be treated with respect.
- (7) See canon 1171.

X = allowable alternative for disposition