



Archbishop of Wellington

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

DECREE OF DECONSECRATION AND REDUCTION TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE OF ST BERNARD'S CHURCH, BROOKLYN

St Bernard's church, Brooklyn, was officially opened on 16 October 1949. It was first known as St Anthony's church, and was a Mass centre of St Mary of the Angels Parish. It became the parish church of an independent parish in 1961 and changed its name to St Bernard's in 1962 to avoid confusion with other parishes named St Anthony's.

In 2016 St Bernard's Parish Brooklyn, St Anne's Parish Newtown, St Francis de Sales Parish Island Bay, and St Joseph's Parish Mount Victoria amalgamated to form the Catholic Parish of Wellington South.

The Wellington region is an area of high seismic risk. A code (the National Building Standards - NBS) has been legislated by the government to provide guidance for the safe use of buildings. St Bernard's church has been assessed as 33-39% NBS, or at medium to high risk of endangering life in a moderate earthquake. Another church in the Catholic Parish of Wellington South has an NBS rating of 47%. The Parish cannot afford to strengthen both churches. With many churches in the Archdiocese of Wellington needing earthquake strengthening the Archdiocese is not able to help the parish financially.

There are grave causes for the deconsecration of St Bernard's Church, Brooklyn, and its reduction to profane but not sordid use. These grave causes are:

The resources of the Catholic Parish of Wellington South are insufficient for strengthening and maintaining the church, and other sources of revenue are not currently available for such purpose.

The Archdiocese is not able to save all churches needing earthquake strengthening. There are four other churches in relative proximity within the parish and in an adjoining parish.

The best use of available priests in the Archdiocese further promotes this decision. The parish ceased celebrating Masses in the church on 18 April 2021.

I have carefully considered the law and the facts concerning St Bernard's Church, Brooklyn. In accord with canon 1222 §2 I consulted with the Council of Priests on 28 May 2021.

The Parish Priest has reported to me that the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Committee agreed to cease using the church, and to ask that it be reduced to profane but not sordid use.

I have ensured that there are no original deeds and other documents on the parish file indicating that no donors or heirs need to be consulted before I place this juridical act.

I have ensured that the altar, sacred objects, and religious artefacts have been removed from the church.

I have ensured that the good of souls and the spiritual welfare of the faithful will not be detrimentally affected by the church being deconsecrated. The spiritual welfare of the faithful will now be provided for in St Anne's Church Newtown, and St Francis de Sales Church Island Bay in the Catholic Parish of Wellington South; and in St Mary of the Angels church in the adjoining parish. These churches are between 2.7km and 6.5km from St Bernard's church. It is not an undue burden for parishioners to travel to another church.

I, the undersigned Archbishop of Wellington, do hereby pronounce and decree that St Bernard's church at 37 Taft Street, Brooklyn, is no longer a sacred place for divine worship. It has herewith lost its blessing and consecration. It can no longer be used for divine worship. It is hereto relegated to profane but not sordid use. (canon 1222 §2)

This decree is to be communicated to the Parish Priest of the Catholic Parish of Wellington South who is the canonical representative of the parish according to canon 532. The parish priest is to inform the parishioners and provide them with a copy of the decree. It may be challenged within the peremptory time limit of ten days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law. (canon 1734 §2)

Given at Wellington on this 12th day of June 2021.

✠ John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington



Notary: