

MOST REVEREND MICHAEL BREHL, C.Ss.R.

By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF PEMBROKE

**DECREE OF AMMALGAMATION OF PAROISSE STTHOMAS-D'AQUIN,
ASTORVILLE, ONTARIO INTO PAROISSE SACRÉ -COEUR, CORBEIL, ONTARIO**

Changes in the spiritual practices among the faithful, a decrease in available clergy and men and women in consecrated life, changes in the general population within our Diocese, as well as concerns regarding temporal matters have affected the means by which the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed within the Diocese of Pembroke.

In an effort to evangelize more effectively the faithful of St-Thomas-d'Aquin, Astorville, as well to administrate the temporal goods of the faithful more efficiently, present pastoral realities indicate a need that St-Thomas-d'Aquin be suppressed and amalgamated into the adjoining Paroisse Sacré-Cœur, Corbeil, Ontario.

Just cause has been determined for this decision through the convergence of serious realities. The notable decrease in Catholic population in the parish; the lack of adequate clergy; the deterioration of the church building (dealt with under the cover of a separate decree); and the assurance that the amalgamation into the proximate Paroisse Sacré-Cœur, Corbeil, Ontario will not bring harm to the good of souls and access to the sacramental life of the Church.

In keeping with the requirements of the Universal Law of the Church, the Presbyteral Council was consulted on 30 March 2026 (Canon 515 § 2), and after having heard the reasons for the proposed merger its members expressed their support for this action. In addition, after having consulted the dean, pastor, deacon and other members of the faithful of the parishes involved in a public meeting on 15 April 2026, I, the undersigned Bishop of Pembroke, hereby declare and decree that the Parish of St-Thomas-d'Aquin, Astorville shall be merged into the existing Paroisse Sacré-Cœur, Corbeil, Ontario.

- The territorial boundaries of the parish shall encompass all of the territory which, up until now, has constituted the territories of Saint Thomas-d'Aquin and Paroisse Sacré-Cœur.
- All assets and obligations currently belonging to aforementioned parish are by this canonical merger, transferred to Paroisse Sacré-Cœur, Corbeil, Ontario.

This merger shall take effect on 24 May 2026, Pentecost Sunday, at which time the public juridic person of Paroisse St-Thomas-d'Aquin, Astorville shall be merged into Paroisse

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Sacré-Cœur, Corbeil. Recourse action may be sought according to the norms of Canons 1732 to 1739 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

Given at the curia of the Diocese of Pembroke on this 6th day of the month of May, in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and twenty-six.

✠Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Bishop of Pembroke

Chancellor

MOST REVEREND MICHAEL BREHL, C.Ss.R.

By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF PEMBROKE

**DECREE ON THE RELEGATION OF
THE CHURCH OF ST-THOMAS-D'AQUIN, ASTORVILLE, ONTARIO**

Whereas bishops “feed their sheep in the name of the name of the Lord by fulfilling their office of teaching, sanctifying and governing them” (Vatican II, *Christus Dominus*, n. 11);

Whereas the diocesan bishop has the duty to exercise careful vigilance over the administration of all the goods which belong to public juridic persons subject to him (c. 1276 §1), and whereas the diocesan bishop, in the administration of goods, concerns himself first of all with providing for divine worship, charity, the apostolate and the support of the clergy, these ends always being given precedence over all others (Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, *Apostolorum Successores*, 22 February 2004, n. 188);

Whereas where the grave causes suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship, the diocesan bishop, after having heard the presbyteral council, can relegate it to profane but not sordid use, with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment hereby (canon 1222 §2);

Whereas the grave cause of relegation to profane but not sordid use may exist not in one obvious grave cause but may arise from a combination of many just causes which combined together manifest a grave cause (see Congregation for Clergy, *Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes, the Closure or Relegation of Churches to Profane but not Sordid Use, and the Alienation of the Same*, 30 April 2013, Prot. No. 20131348);

Whereas the gravity of the reason results from the sum of the circumstances which show that the reason is of great importance in the concrete case (see Nicholas Schoch, “*Relegation of the Churches to Profane Use (C. 1222 §2): Reason and Procedure*,” *The Jurist* 67 [2007] 491);

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Whereas the celebration of Holy Mass and the other sacraments ceased at St-Thomas-d'Aquin Church in Astorville in December 2023 due to the deterioration of the church building;

Whereas the church building currently has serious structural issues in need of repair;

Whereas the church building currently has the presence of harmful mould;

Whereas the required financial resources needed to repair and maintain the present church structure is unattainable;

Whereas there are no outside sources of revenue to carry out the serious repairs;

Whereas the Catholic population in Astorville has decreased over a period of time and members of the faithful in this area are not deprived of opportunities for divine worship and the reception of the sacraments;

Whereas, Reverend Cyril Okebanama, SMMM, pastor of St-Thomas-d'Aquin conveyed in a letter of 24 March 2026 the parish community's desire that the Bishop of Pembroke make a decision for the relegation of the church;

Whereas, on 15 April 2026 we held an open and public meeting at with parishioners of St-Thomas-d'Aquin parish at Paroisse Sacré-Cœur, Corbeil, Ontario to consult them on the matters, to which it was unanimous among those gathered that it would be for the good of souls that the church be relegated to profane but not sordid use;

Whereas, having examined the facts of the present case, we have abundantly established that grave reasons required by canon 1222 §2 are present, even if some of the reasons invoked may not by themselves constitute a grave cause, they do so when taken together;

After having heard the presbyteral council on 30 March 2026, and, after having exposed the motives for the relegation of the church, the presbyteral council gave favourable advice for the relegation of St-Thomas-d'Aquin Church in Astorville, Ontario.

Therefore, I, the undersigned Bishop of Pembroke, after prayerful consideration, having weighed all the reasons and causes, have decided as follows:

DECREE

1. St-Thomas-d'Aquin Church, Astorville is hereby reduced to profane but not sordid use according to the precepts of canon 1222 §2 for the grave causes mentioned above.

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2. Negotiations that may lead to the sale of the property may commence, notwithstanding the need to follow the proper procedures regarding the alienation of property.

3. Prior to alienation, all sacred objects, relics, sacred furnishings, etc. are to be removed for use in other sacred edifices or to be stored in ecclesiastical custody. In case the altars cannot be removed they must be respectfully destroyed.

This decree is effective immediately. At the same time, I order this decree to be made public to all the faithful through its publication on this day on the website of the Diocese of Pembroke. This publication on the website will be the legitimate notification. A notarized copy of this decree will be sent to the pastor.

All those who claim to have been aggrieved by this decree are herewith notified that, if they desire to file recourse against our decree, they are required *ad validitatem*, to submit a petition in the sense of canon 1734 §1 to us within ten useful days from the legitimate notification of this decree.

Given at the curia of the Diocese of Pembroke, on this 6th day of May 2026, the feast of St. François de Laval.

✠Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Bishop of Pembroke

Chancellor