

OFFICIAL DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING A STRUCTURE RECENTLY BUILT ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER REED ASSUMPTION CHURCH

Despite the good faith efforts of Diocesan officials over the course of several weeks, the failure on the part of the current owner of the former site of Reed Assumption Church to cooperate makes it necessary for the Diocese to issue the following announcement.

For the good of the parishioners of Our Lady of Hope Parish, Attica, and Saint Gaspar Del Bufalo Parish, Bellevue, and for all of the faithful, this comes to address the recent construction of a structure at N. Co. Rd 29 in Bellevue, on the site of the former Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which had been relegated in 2017 and subsequently razed. Although Saint Gaspar Del Bufalo Parish retained ownership and care of the parish cemetery which it continues to operate, a portion of the former parish premises were sold to a private party subject to certain deed restrictions. One deed restriction prohibits use of the property for any manner which is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Despite this express condition, a structure has been erected on the premises in such a way as to suggest that it serves in some fashion as a Catholic church or worship space.

Canon law provides that “no church is to be built without the express consent of the diocesan bishop. The diocesan bishop is not to give consent unless, after having heard the presbyteral council and the rectors of the neighboring churches, he judges that the new church can serve the good of souls and that the means necessary for building the church and for divine worship will not be lacking (can. 1215 §§1-2).” Additionally, private chapels, understood as places for divine worship, can only be designated as such with permission of the local bishop. Because the structure was constructed without such consent or permission, in fact without communication with the Diocese of Toledo, its existence and use violates both the deed restriction and church law. Under these circumstances, it would not be appropriate for Catholics to visit or frequent the structure for Catholic prayer, gatherings, or Church-related functions.

Accordingly, in order to avoid scandal and confusion, and to promote unity and communion, Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas has determined that neither Mass nor any other Sacraments or liturgical worship shall be celebrated at the structure. No printed materials, communications, signage or promotional items related in any way to the structure may bear the name or any form of the name of the Catholic Church, the Diocese of Toledo, Saint Gaspar Del Bufalo Parish, Reed Assumption Church, or otherwise suggest that the structure is an approved sacred place of worship.

Please pray together that all parishioners will continue to move forward as one to become, in the words of Saint Peter, “as living stones, being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).