

PROCEDURE FOR THE DISPOSITION OF SACRED OBJECTS

The following procedures will be used in the Archdiocese of Detroit to determine the proper disposition of the sacred objects which are owned by a clustered, merged or closed parish or church.

Sacred Objects: any item that the Church or the faithful regards as holy by way of blessing or veneration by the faithful. This includes, but is not limited to the altar, tabernacle, ambo, baptismal font, ambry, statues, images (icons), relics of the saints, Mass vessels, Mass vestments, liturgical books, altar linens, etc.

Cluster

A cluster is a group of two or three parishes that share a priest as pastor. A parish in a cluster retains its property, which should not be moved from one parish to another.

Merger

A merger refers to two or more parishes joining together to become one new parish. The new parish takes in all the people of the former parishes and may sometimes preserve the Church buildings and facilities that were used by the former parishes, with one Church being identified as the primary place for parishioners to regularly worship.

Should the merger plan call for the closure of a church or chapel, within thirty days of the announcement of the merger, a team consisting of the pastor (administrator) of the closing church or chapel, a well-reputed parishioner from the closing church or chapel, and the director of the Worship Office of the Archdiocese will make an inventory of the sacred goods. Private property will, of course, be returned to the rightful owner(s). Within the week following the final Mass, the team will meet to review the inventory.

Sacred objects that are not relocated to another church or chapel within the merger will follow the protocol for goods in suppressed parishes as described below. The Worship Office of the Archdiocese will coordinate efforts in this regard.

Suppressed Parish – Closed Church

In the rare case of a parish suppression, the Archdiocese will be responsible for the sacred objects of the closed church. Within thirty days of the announcement of the closure, an inventory of the sacred objects will be taken by a team consisting of the pastor or administrator of the parish, a well-reputed parishioner from the closing church, and the director of the Worship Office. The determination of which items are considered sacred is within the purview of the Worship Office of the Archdiocese. Private property will, of course, be returned to the rightful owner(s).

All items are to remain in the church until after the final Mass. Within the week of the final Mass the team will meet to review the inventory.

All requests for sacred objects must be made in writing to the Worship Office.

For a three-week period following the closure, pastors (administrators) of neighboring parishes in the vicariate will be allowed to remove items for use in their own parishes. Removal of sacred objects will be facilitated by the Worship Office. Inventories will be provided to pastors (administrators) on request. All costs related to the removal of these items will be paid by the parish taking the sacred objects.

For a three week period following the period reserved for the vicariate all other pastors (administrators) of the Archdiocese will be allowed to request inventories of remaining items for use in their own parishes. **Requests for specific items must be made in writing to the Worship Office** and the responsibility and costs for removing the items falls to the requesting parish. All items secured on behalf of a parish become the property of the parish.

When dealing with an altar, the relics must be removed from the altar stone and transferred to the Archdiocesan Archives. An altar is never to be sold or handed over for public use.

After six weeks the Worship Office will determine the disposition of any remaining sacred objects.