



July 31, 2019
Joint Statement from the Diocese of Joliet
and the Association for the Preservation of St. Rose of Lima Chapel

KANKAKEE, IL -

On July 31, 2019, the Diocese of Joliet and Bishop R. Daniel Conlon announced the formal transfer of St. Rose Chapel (located at 486 W. Merchant Street in Kankakee, Illinois) to the Association for the Preservation of St. Rose of Lima Chapel (“Association”), an Illinois not-for-profit organization established in accordance with civil and canon law for the purpose of sustaining the historical religious location.

St. Rose of Lima Parish was founded over 150 years ago by French-Canadian residents in the newly-formed Kankakee County, Illinois, and formally established by Bishop Anthony O’Regan in what was then parts of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The church at St. Rose, constructed in 1877 under the leadership of Rev. Peter Paradis, was already one of the oldest buildings to become part of the Diocese of Joliet when it was established in 1948 by Pope Pius XII.

Due to declining local population, economic factors, and a decreasing number of available diocesan priests, in 2015 Rev. Santos (Sunny) Castillo was appointed simultaneously as pastor to three Kankakee parishes, including St. Rose. In 2017, St. Rose of Lima Parish merged with St. Teresa and St. Martin to become St. John Paul II Catholic Parish, with St. Rose Church indefinitely closing its doors as a cost-saving measure.

Following a large outpouring of support for the building, the Diocese of Joliet Bishop, Most Rev. R. Daniel Conlon, agreed to donate the property to a group of parishioners willing to maintain it in accordance with Catholic principles. That group formed the Association in coordination with Church leaders and, with Fr. Ray Lescher being assigned as chaplain, St. Rose of Lima Chapel will continue to host Eucharistic Adoration as well as occasional opportunities for the celebration of sacraments.

“St. Rose of Lima Chapel is obviously a culturally and historically significant location to the local Church,” Bishop Conlon noted. “I am very pleased that this motivated group of Catholic parishioners have stepped forward to maintain and operate the building after the parish could no longer afford to do so. Their dedication to their faith and to preserving the tradition handed down to them is a beautiful gesture that will be appreciated by future generations of Catholics in Kankakee.”