



Diocese of Worcester
Office of the Bishop
49 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

DECREE

In Nomine Domini. Amen

The Nativity School, located at 37 Lincoln Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, was established in 2003 and developed by the senior administration of the College of the Holy Cross of Worcester to address the devastating graduation rate among boys experiencing economic insecurity. It currently serves boys in grades five through eight.

The school claims to be a “Catholic” school affiliated with the Roman Catholic/Jesuit tradition. The administration of the school has permitted the flying of “Black Lives Matter” and “Gay Pride” flags in front of the school for a period of time.

I publicly stated in an open letter dated, May 4, 2022, that “these symbols (flags) embody specific agendas or ideologies (that) contradict Catholic social and moral teaching.” It is my contention that the “Gay Pride” flag represents support of gay marriage and actively living a LGBTQ+ lifestyle.

This is also true of “Black Lives Matter.” The Catholic Church teaches that all life is sacred and the Church certainly stands unequivocally behind the phrase “black lives matter” and strongly affirms that all lives matter.

However, the “Black Lives Matter” movement has co-opted the phrase and promotes a platform that directly contradicts Catholic social teaching on the importance and role of the nuclear family and seeks to disrupt the family structure in clear opposition to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The flying of these flags in front of a Catholic school sends a mixed, confusing and scandalous message to the public about the Church's stance on these important moral and social issues.

According to canon 803, §§ 1-3, of the *Code of Canon Law*, the Diocesan Bishop must maintain vigilance over Catholic Schools within his Diocese, even those operated by lay groups who seek the use of the title "Catholic" for their schools. Such usage requires ecclesiastical approbation (canon 803, §3).

An 'Instruction' recently published by the Holy See through the Dicastery for Catholic Education, entitled "The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue," stated that "Catholic schools are a part of the Church's mission (par. 21) and have the great responsibility to bear witness through an education project clearly inspired by the Gospel (par. 28). Catholic schools are ecclesial entities. As such they participate in the evangelizing mission of the Church and represent the privileged environment in which the Church's education is carried out." (par. 30)

As Diocesan Bishop, it is my sacred duty and inherent responsibility to determine when a school claiming to be "Catholic" is acting in such a way that is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church and disregards my legitimate authority as the guardian and overseer of Catholic education in the Diocese of Worcester. Despite my insistence that the school administration remove these flags because of the confusion and the properly theological scandal that they do and can promote, they refuse to do so. This leaves me no other option but to take canonical action.

All the requirements of canons 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 have been fulfilled.

After prayerful consideration of this matter, I, the Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, holding before me my pastoral responsibilities to this particular Church, in view of canon 381, §1, hereby declare and decree the following:

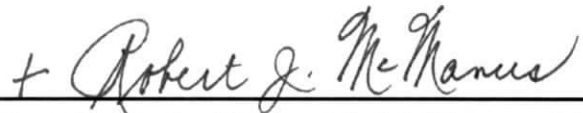
- The Nativity School of Worcester is prohibited from this time forward from identifying itself as a "Catholic" school and may no longer use the title "Catholic" to describe itself;

- Mass, sacraments and sacramentals are no longer permitted to be celebrated on Nativity School premises or be sponsored by Nativity School in any church building or chapel within the Diocese of Worcester;
- The Nativity School is not allowed to undertake any fundraising involving diocesan institutions in the Diocese of Worcester and is not permitted to be listed or advertise in the *Diocesan Directory*;
- The name of Bishop Emeritus Daniel P. Reilly must be removed from the list of the Board of Trustees of Nativity School.

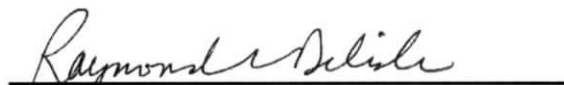
This decree is effective immediately.

I order that this decree be published.

Given at Worcester, Massachusetts, this the tenth day of June, in the Year of Our Lord, two thousand twenty-two.



Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, S.T.D.
Bishop of Worcester



Raymond L. Delisle
Chancellor