



Office of the Archbishop
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Prot. N. 2018 RMC-3

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

“Every effort is to be made that parishes, in which apostolic activity can be performed only with difficulty or less effectively because of the excessive number of the faithful or too vast a territory or for any other reason, be suitably divided or dismembered according to the various circumstances. Likewise, parishes which are too small should be united insofar as the situation demands it and circumstances permit.” Blessed Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio, Ecclesiae Sanctae*, n. 21, (1), August 6, 1966

Over the past several decades, many things have changed in this particular church. Changing demographics have affected the size and wealth of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the vitality of her parishes. This is particularly true in the City of Chicago itself, where the total population has decreased by more than 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,736,000 today. We also have many vacant and underused parochial buildings, and, as elsewhere, fewer priests to pastor our faith communities. For the number of parishes we have, our human and financial resources are spread very thin.

According to the 2017 edition of *Annuario Pontificio*, the Archdiocese of Chicago had a total population of 6,390,000, with 351 parishes for a Catholic population of 2,497,000. In the same year, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a total population of 11,599,000 and 287 parishes for a Catholic population of 4,392,000, more than twice the number of Catholics per parish than Chicago. Also, many of our parishes were founded for national, linguistic, and ethnic groups that no longer live in the neighborhoods where their churches once flourished.

Too many of our parishes have been unable to support themselves and are receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. Between 2012 and 2016 these subsidies amounted to \$116,900,000.00, including \$27,600,000.00 in unpaid receivables at 106 parishes, \$36,800,000.00 in payroll advances and unpaid receivables at 90 Catholic schools, and another \$52,500,000.00 in grants to 92 Catholic schools. For the last fiscal year (2017) these subsidies increased by \$5,571,048.00 for parishes and \$12,606,861.00 for Catholic schools. Little, if any, of this money will be recovered by the archdiocese. The Archdiocese of Chicago cannot continue this level of financial support for parishes and Catholic schools. Parishes will become more vital, able to support themselves when possible. Above all, they must be active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, and charitable outreach.

Inspired by the experience of St. Francis of Assisi before the cross of San Damiano, and by Pope Francis's dream of “a missionary option ... capable of transforming everything”

(Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27, November 24, 2013), I consulted widely and announced in early 2016 the inauguration of *Renew My Church (RMC)*, a multi-year process aimed at obtaining and preserving the vitality of our parishes. It is my intention that every parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago join with some of its neighbors and plan for the future. Careful planning will create a menu of possible options for greater vitality. It will also identify parishes likely to be reorganized through pastoral coordination, mergers, and other significant alterations, including closing churches no longer useful for divine worship.

In early 2017 five parishes and four parochial schools, all located within approximately 24 four square miles of the suburban North Shore area of Cook County, were designated to form the second of two pilot groupings to initiate *RMC*. The parish priests and delegates from SS. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish and School, 191 Linden Street, Winnetka, Illinois 60093-3832; Sacred Heart Parish and School, 1077 Tower Road, Winnetka, Illinois 60093-1852; St. Philip the Apostle Parish, 1962 Old Willow Road, Northfield, Illinois 60093-2913; St. Francis Xavier Church and School, 524 Ninth Street, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2714; and St. Joseph Parish and School, 1747 Lake Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091, met regularly as the North Shore Grouping Feedback and Discernment Team. On September 7, 2017, they presented a Community Engagement and Planning Feedback Summary to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group formed by lay and ordained representatives from across the archdiocese (see Submission of September 7, 2017, attached to this Decree).

Narrowing their work from 13 to five possible scenarios, the Grouping Team was unable to form a consensus. Nonetheless, Scenario B was ultimately selected for recommendation by the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission. Under this scenario SS. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish would remain a separate juridic person; Sacred Heart Parish would join with St. Philip the Apostle Parish to form a single new parish; and St. Francis Xavier Parish and St. Joseph Parish would also be joined to form a single new parish. The selected scenario also provides that none of the five parochial churches be closed, and that each of the four school campuses remain open.

Among the data informing the recommendation for the union of Sacred Heart Parish and St. Philip the Apostle Parish are the following facts:

- Sacred Heart Parish was established in 1897 to serve the then sparsely populated community of Hubbard Woods, Illinois, now part of the Village of Winnetka. Since 2008, the number of registered families has decreased from 1260 to 1003; school enrolment from 306 to 190; and Religious Education enrolment from 662 to 394. The Parish now has a Sunday Mass attendance of 746 persons, an increase of more than 10% from 664 in 2016.
- St. Philip the Apostle Parish was formed in 1947 at the request of 90 Catholic families in the Village of Northfield. In 1978 the parish served 500 families and had 270 pupils in a parochial school that has been closed since 2003 due to declining enrollment. Sunday Mass attendance is now 288 persons, a drop of nearly 18% from the 352 last year, significantly below the general threshold of 500 needed to sustain the vitality

of a parochial community with its own pastor.

Each of these two parishes has had its own clergy and lay staff, its own programming, and its own separate administration. Combining these elements will provide significant savings and other efficiencies as the parishes are joined together under a single pastor and a dynamic staff, all working together for the common good of the new parish community.

Having considered the work and representations of the Grouping Team, and that of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission I decided to advance the aforementioned Scenario B.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on January 16, 2018, at the O'Hare Campus of DePaul University. There, the proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission to alter the status of Sacred Heart Parish, Winnetka, and St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Northfield, according to Scenario B was presented to the Council. Having heard the Presbyteral Council at the same meeting, I now, after invoking the Holy Spirit,

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2018, Sacred Heart Parish, Winnetka, and St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Northfield, both in the suburban North Shore area of the archdiocese, will be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new juridic person on to be known as Divine Mercy Parish;
2. The missions of the extinguished Sacred Heart Parish and the extinguished St. Philip the Apostle Parish will be subsumed completely into the newly established Divine Mercy Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new Divine Mercy Parish;
4. The territory of the new Divine Mercy Parish will be the sum of the territories of the two parishes to be extinguished, namely the territory located within these boundaries:

Start at Lake-Cook Road and Union Pacific R.R. tracks,
East on south side of Lake-Cook Road to Lake Michigan,
South along Lake Michigan to Elm Street.,
West on north side of Elm Street. to Hibbard Road.,
South on west side of Hibbard Road. to Northfield village limits south of the E-W axis of Longmeadow Drive,
West along north side of Northfield village limits to the intersection of Winnetka Road and Waukegan Road,
West along north side of the extension of Winnetka Road to Shermer Road,
North on the east side of Shermer Road to Willow Road,
East on south side of Willow Road to Waukegan Road,
North on east side of Waukegan Road to Voltz Road,

East on south side of Voltz Road to Sunset Ridge Road,
North on east side of Sunset Ridge Road to Skokie Boulevard,
North on east side of Skokie Boulevard to Dundee Road,
West on north side of Dundee Road to Union Pacific R.R.,
North on east side of Union Pacific R.R. to Lake-Cook Road.

5. The churches of the two extinguished parishes will be parochial churches of the new Divine Mercy Parish, retaining their own titles;

6. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, with due regard for acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the two extinguished parishes and any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the newly established Divine Mercy Parish (see canon 121);

7. The documents given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of January 16, 2018, will be attached to this decree;

8. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the two extinguished parishes will be commended to the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago for safe keeping and suitable access; and

9. Notification of this decree will be given to the pastoral leadership of the two extinguished parishes and to their parishioners. Notification will be given through the parish bulletins, and generally on the archdiocesan website.

Before hierarchical recourse may be taken against this decree, a petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).

Given this 11th day of May, A.D. 2018.
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Reverend Mr. Daniel G. Welter, J.D.
Chancellor

Attachments

**THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF
THE RELEVANT MEETING OR MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL
ATTACHED TO THIS DECREE ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO THE OFFICE OF THE
CHANCELLOR OR THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS**