

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office of the Archbishop
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Prat. N. 2021 RMC-30

DECREE

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

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 fell by nearly 21% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,693,976 in 2020. During the last decade, the total population of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) declined by less than 2%, from 5,903,190 in 2010 to an estimated 5,821,933 in 2020. Over the same ten-year period the Catholic population of the Archdiocese of Chicago declined by nearly 7% (159,000), from 2,338,000 to 2,179,000.

A good number of our parishes were founded in the first half of the 20th Century or earlier. Many were established for national, linguistic, or ethnic groups that no longer reside in the archdiocese or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished. Today, many of our parishes are unable or struggling to support themselves. Consequently, from Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2020, the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$177,109,682.00 in support to parishes and Catholic schools: \$46,332,584.00 to 106 parishes and \$130,777,098.00 to 83 Catholic schools. This includes \$14,777,155.00 during Fiscal Year 2020 alone: \$3,711,999.00 to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 to Catholic schools, mostly parochial schools. Completely due to the generosity of the faithful people of the archdiocese and other gracious donors, these subsidies cannot continue at this high level. Our mission is to convert our parishes, helping them to become more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. For this mission, the parishes need a growing and stable membership and the financial means to support themselves.

More than six years ago, inspired by the experience of St. Francis of Assisi before the cross of the ruined church of San Damiano and the Holy Father's dream of "a missionary option ... capable of transforming everything" (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27, November 24, 2013), and with wide and continuing consultation among the clergy and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Chicago, particularly in the Presbyteral Council, we embarked on the inauguration of *Renew My Church* (RMC). This is our multi-year process aimed at converting our parishes for mission. It is my intention that every parish join with some of its neighbors (groupings) to plan the future. Careful planning will create a menu of possibilities. We are identifying parishes to be reconfigured through pastoral coordination with neighboring parishes, divisions, unions, and other structural and governance changes.

This decree concerns three parishes located on the Northside of the City of Chicago: St. Edward Parish (established 1899), 4350 West Sunnyside Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60630-4146;

Our Lady of Mercy Parish (established 1911, enlarged by extinctive union effective July 1, 2021), 4432 North Troy Street, Chicago, Illinois 60625-4520; and, especially, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (established 1912, personal parish for faithful of Polish origins), 3834 North Spaulding Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618-4413. The latter two of these three parishes have been serving a predominantly Spanish-speaking Catholic population.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish was 505 (58% Spanish and 42% English). This figure represents a 35% decline in Sunday attendance at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish over 20 years (from 780 to 505), and a total loss of Polish language Masses in the parish.

In Fiscal Year 2019, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish had an operating deficit of \$119,636.00, church debt of \$41,593.00, savings of \$317,636.00, and assessed capital needs of \$717,620.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish included five funerals, six marriages, and 43 Baptisms. These figures are below the average for a parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Following consultations over the last year with lay and clergy members of the above-named parishes, including input from parishioners at large, a report was submitted to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group of lay and clergy representatives from across the Archdiocese of Chicago. Recently, the *Renew My Church* Executive Committee submitted a recommendation to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance, an operating deficit, church debt, and significant assessed capital needs at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, alongside fewer priests, and, most importantly, no need for a Polish personal parish in the neighborhood, change is prudent.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 123, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me a proposal that the above-mentioned Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and its assets divided equally between St. Edward Parish and the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy Parish. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* video conference over the internet on May 4, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 30 for and 1 against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

I decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2021, the above-mentioned Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish is extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church;

2. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the extinguished Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and then divided equally and granted to the neighboring territorial parish of St. Edward and the enlarged territorial parish of Our Lady of Mercy (canon 123);

3. The church of the extinguished Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, located within the territorial boundaries of the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy Parish, will be administered by that enlarged parish, retaining its own title;

4. The data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of May 4, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

5. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the extinguished Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish will be collected and maintained at the Our Lady of Mercy Church campus, unless otherwise determined by the expert staff of the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago; and

6. Notification of this decree shall be given immediately through the official website of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The decree shall be conveyed to the pastors of St. Edward Parish, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. As soon as possible, these pastors shall inform their parishioners of the decree through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, signed, and well-argued petition, asking to revoke or amend the decree, must be sent or delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop of Chicago, Archbishop Quigley Center, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

Given this 10th day of June, A.O. 2021.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
Chicago, Illinois



Ecclesiastical Notary



Attachments

THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING
OF MAY 4, 2021, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE
AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM