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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-9

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 2,686,530 in 2020. The archdiocese has many vacant, old, and underused parochial buildings and fewer priests to pastor our faith communities.

According to the US Census Bureau, the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) had an estimated total population of 5,881,250 in 2018. The 2018 *Annuario Pontificio* indicated our archdiocese had 345 parishes serving a Catholic population of 2,512,000: an average of 7,281 Catholics per parish. According to the same source, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a total population of 11,519,517, with 287 parishes for a Catholic population of 4,362,000: an average of 15,199 Catholics per parish. For the Archdiocese of New York, the figures were 2,656,987 Catholics in 294 parishes, an average 9,037 Catholics per parish. A good number of our parishes were founded in the first half of the last 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.

Many of our parishes are unable or barely able to support themselves. Consequently, many have been receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. 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 was an increase of \$14,777,155.00 over a single year: \$3,711,999.00 more to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 more to Catholic schools. While completely due to the generosity of the faithful people of the archdiocese and other gracious donors, these subsidies cannot continue at this high level, especially in times of enormous economic strain. 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 the parishes need a growing and stable membership and the financial means to support themselves.

Nearly 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 the 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 five small predominantly African-American parishes, all located within a territory of approximately six and one-half square miles in the Bronzeville, Kenwood, and Washington Park neighborhoods of the Southside of the City of Chicago: Holy Angels Parish (established 1880), 615 East Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois 60653-2309; St. Elizabeth Parish (established 1881), 50 East 41st Street, Chicago, Illinois 60653-2124; Corpus Christi Parish (established 1901), 4920 South Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60615-2306; St. Ambrose Parish (established 1904), 1012 East 47th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60653-3600; and St. Anselm Parish (established 1909), 6045 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637-2164. Holy Angels Parish is pastored by a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish and St. Anselm Parish is a member of the Society of the Divine Word, the pastor of St. Ambrose Parish is a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Corpus Christi Parish is led by a priest of the Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria.

In Fiscal Year 2019 the average Sunday Mass attendance at Holy Angels Parish was 198. The same year the average Sunday attendance at St. Elizabeth Parish was 41, at St. Ambrose parish it was 137, at St. Anselm Parish it was 74, and at Corpus Christi Parish it was 152. The combined total average Sunday attendance at the five parishes was 602 in Fiscal Year 2019, this is a total decline of 61% over 20 years for the five parishes combined (from 1542 to 602). At Holy Angels Parish the decline over the same 20-year period was 71% (from 678 to 198). At St. Elizabeth Parish the decline was 87% (from 308 to 41), it was 32% at St. Ambrose Parish (from 202 to 137), 59% at St. Anselm Parish (from 180 to 74), and 13% at Corpus Christi Parish (from 174 to 152).

In Fiscal Year 2019, Holy Angels Parish had an operating deficit of \$125,866.00, capital needs of \$1,931,600.00, total church debt of \$815,331.00, and savings of \$496,627.00. In the same year St. Elizabeth Parish had an operating deficit of \$207,878.00, capital needs of \$1,875,000.00, church debt of \$1,677,403.00, and savings of \$3,772.00. For St. Ambrose Parish the Fiscal Year 2019 figures show an operating deficit of \$303,756.00, capital needs of \$1,152,650.00, a debt of \$1,924,529.00, and savings of \$8,626.00. For St. Anselm Parish the figures are an operating deficit of \$122,147.00, capital needs of \$1,033,100.00, church debt of \$71,649.00, and savings of \$92,373.00. For Corpus Christi Parish the figures indicate an operating deficit of \$282,073.00, capital needs of \$2,616,900.00, church debt of \$610,955.00, and savings of \$439,600.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019 liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at Holy Angels Parish included six funerals, one marriage, and one Baptism. In the same period there were 12 funerals, no marriages, and no Baptisms at St. Elizabeth Parish; one funeral, two marriages, and three baptism at St. Ambrose Parish; two funerals, no marriages, and no Baptisms at St. Anselm Parish; and 11 funerals, no marriages and no Baptisms at Corpus Christi Parish. The combined totals for the five parishes are 32 funerals, three marriages, and four Baptisms.

Following consultations last year with lay and clergy members of the 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 Commission submitted its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to the small geographical size of each of the parishes, fewer diocesan and religious priests to serve as pastors, recurring deficits in all five of the parishes, historical decline and the small numbers of those participating at Sunday Mass, declining parish incomes, aging populations, changes are in order. The area is unable to sustain more than one parish to serve the combined communities. For evangelization and mission to be the focus of future ministry, the Church in this area of the Archdiocese of Chicago, must consolidate resources under the leadership of a single pastoral team.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me the recommended proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, that the adjacent and above mentioned Holy Angels Parish, St. Elizabeth Parish, St. Ambrose Parish, St. Anselm Parish, and Corpus Christi Parish, all on the Southside of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as a separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within combined territories of the five parishes, with Holy Angels Church, the original church of this grouping, to be designated the parish church. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago via video conference over the internet on January 15, 18-19, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 33 for and one against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2021, the above-mentioned Holy Angels Parish, St. Elizabeth Parish, St. Ambrose Parish, St. Anselm Parish, and Corpus Christi Parish will be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the combined territory of the five parishes, and called, *ad interim*, Corpus Christi, Holy Angels, and SS. Elizabeth, Ambrose, and Anselm Parish;
2. The missions of the five extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new Corpus Christi, Holy Angels, and SS. Elizabeth, Ambrose, and Anselm Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the five extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new Corpus Christi, Holy Angels, and SS. Elizabeth, Ambrose, and Anselm Parish;
4. The territory of the new Corpus Christi, Holy Angels, and SS. Elizabeth, Ambrose, and Anselm Parish will be as depicted and described in the map and document attached to this decree;

5. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the five extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new Corpus Christi, Holy Angels, and SS. Elizabeth, Ambrose, and Anselm Parish (see canon 121);

6. The churches of the extinguished Holy Angels Parish, the extinguished St. Elizabeth Parish, the extinguished St. Ambrose Parish, the extinguished St. Anselm Parish, and the extinguished Corpus Christi Parish will be churches of the new Corpus Christi, Holy Angels, and SS. Elizabeth, Ambrose, and Anselm Parish, and Holy Angels Church will be designated the parish church of the new parish;

7. The data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of January 15, 18-19, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

8. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the five extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the Holy Angels Church campus, unless otherwise determined by the expert staff of the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago; and


9. 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 Holy Angels Parish, St. Elizabeth Parish, St. Ambrose Parish, St. Anselm Parish, and Corpus Christi Parish. As soon as possible, the 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, and signed petition asking me to revoke or amend the decree must be 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 25th day of February, A.D. 2021.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING
OF JANUARY 15, 18-19, 2021, ARE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE
AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM