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Prot. N. 2019 RMC-1

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

“Likewise, parishes which are too small should be united insofar as the situation demands it and circumstances permit.” St. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio, Ecclesiae Sanctae*, n. 21, (1), August 6, 1966

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 nearly 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,736,000 today. 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 had an estimated total population of 5,914,783 in 2018. The 2018 *Annuario Pontificio* indicates Chicago had 345 parishes serving a Catholic population of 2,512,000. In 2018 the Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a total population of 11,519,517, with 287 parishes for a Catholic population of 4,362,000, more than twice the number of Catholics per parish than Chicago. In the same year the Archdiocese of New York had 2,656,987 Catholics in 294 parishes, also a much larger parishioners per parish number than in Chicago. A good number of our parishes were founded in the first half of the last century or earlier. They were established for national, linguistic, or ethnic groups that no longer live in the archdiocese or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished.

Too many of our parishes have been unable to support themselves and are receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2018 these subsidies amounted to \$144,373,461.00, including \$38,171,840.00 to 106 parishes, and \$106,201,621.00 to 83 Catholic schools. More than \$25,000,000.00 was given in the last two fiscal years alone. None 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. Our hope is that our parishes will become more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. To achieve this hope, the parishes must be able to support themselves when possible.

Almost three years ago, inspired by the experience of St. Francis of Assisi before the cross of the ruined church of San Damiano, and by the Holy Father’s dream of “a missionary option ... capable of transforming everything” (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27, November 24, 2013), I announced the inauguration of *Renew My Church (RMC)*, a multi-year, intentional 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 together for the future.

Careful planning will create a menu of possible options for future vitality. We will also identify parishes likely to be restructured through pastoral coordination, unions, and other significant alterations, including closing churches no longer useful for divine worship. To date, 14 parishes in seven geographic localities of the archdiocese have completed *RMC* planning and were restructured to form seven new parishes, another five parishes were left unchanged. So far, two churches have been relegated to profane but not sordid use. This decree involves two of four parishes in the Chicago Southside neighborhood of Brighton Park.

In early 2018 the parish priests and delegates from Our Lady of Fatima Parish – Shrine of St. Anne, 2751 West 38th Place, Chicago, Illinois 60632-1686 (originally established in the 1880s as St. Joseph Parish for French-speaking Catholics, and formed from a union with the older territorial parish of St. Agnes Parish in 1991); St. Pancratius Parish, 4025 South Sacramento Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60632-2495 (originally formed in 1924 for Polish-speaking Catholics overflowing from Five Holy Martyrs Parish); Five Holy Martyrs Parish, 4327 South Richmond Street, Chicago, Illinois 60632-2504 (established in 1908 for Polish-speaking Catholics in the Brighton Park area); and Immaculate Conception Parish, 2745 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, Illinois 60632-1946 (a personal parish for Lithuanians founded in 1914), met to plan their future. The four campuses, together with their churches, are all located within the less than three square mile territory of Our Lady of Fatima Parish – Shrine of St. Anne. The four parishes share responsibility St. John Paul II Catholic School. On May 21, 2018, 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 May 21, 2018, attached to this Decree).

Narrowing their work to five possible scenarios, the Grouping Team chose to recommend Scenario B to the Archdiocesan Commission. Under this scenario the territory of Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine would be divided into two parts and the four existing parishes of the Brighton Park Grouping would be restructured as two new territorial parishes through the union of Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and St. Pancratius Parish and the union of Five Holy Martyrs Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish. None of the four churches would be closed, and the existing Catholic school would become the co-sponsored parochial school of the two new parishes. Among other data recommending Scenario B are the following considerations:

- In 2015 the total population of the Brighton Park area was stable and estimated to be 44,202. By far, the largest ethnic/linguistic group is Hispanic, more than 85% of the population and the prevailing Catholic demographic. The second largest group is of Asian origin, followed by less than seven percent of European descent.
- The scenario gives each of the two new parishes a stable and, perhaps, growing population, one more conducive to future vitality. Leaving four churches open allows for the continued care of older and younger folks, who will still be able to walk to church.

- If feasible, liturgical services and devotions will continue for diminishing numbers of Polish and Lithuanian speaking populations who remain in or return to the neighborhood for worship and other services.
- Reducing the number of pastorates and maintaining parochial staffs for two parishes rather than four will reduce costs, promote other efficiencies, and allow for stable and competitive compensation.

Having heard the recommendation of the Grouping Team, and after considering other possibilities, including four other scenarios, the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission decided to advance the recommended 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 September 12-13, 2018, at University of St. Mary of the Lake-Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois. There, the proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission to alter the status of Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine, uniting it with St. Pancratius Parish, was presented to the Council and accepted. Having heard the Presbyteral Council at the same meeting, I now, after invoking the Holy Spirit,

***decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2019, the territory of Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine will be divided into two parts. In the first part, Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and St. Pancratius Parish, both in the Brighton Park neighborhood, will be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new juridic person, a territorial parish known, *ad interim*, as Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pancratius Parish;

2. The missions of the extinguished Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and the extinguished St. Pancratius Parish will be subsumed completely into the newly established Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pancratius Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pancratius Parish;

4. The territory of the new Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pancratius Parish will be the territory of the former Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine north of Archer Avenue, namely the territory located within these boundaries:

Start at the Sanitary and Ship Canal at Railroad Bridge (3600 West),  
Northeast on the south side of Sanitary and Ship Canal to Western Avenue,  
South on the west side of Western Avenue to Archer Avenue,  
Southwest on the north side of Archer Avenue to Santa Fe Railroad Tracks,  
North on the east side of Santa Fe Railroad Tracks to Sanitary and Ship Canal.

5. The churches of the extinguished Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and the extinguished St. Pancratius Parish will remain open as parochial churches of the new Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pancratius Parish, retaining their own titles;

6. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the extinguished Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and the extinguished St. Pancratius Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established Our Lady of Fatima and St. Pancratius Parish (see canon 121);

7. The documents given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of September 12-13, 2018, will be attached to this decree;

8. In due course, the sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the extinguished Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and the extinguished St. Pancratius Parish 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 immediately to the pastoral leadership of Our Lady of Fatima Parish – St. Anne Shrine and St. Pancratius Parish, both in the Brighton Park neighborhood of the City of Chicago, and to their parishioners. Publication will be made 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 14<sup>th</sup> day of January, A.D. 2019.  
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 ARE  
ATTACHED TO THIS DECREE AND AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO THE OFFICE OF THE  
CHANCELLOR OR THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS