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Prot. N. 2019 RMC-3

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 three parishes in the south suburban municipality of Calumet City.

In early 2018 the parish priests and other representatives from St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 768 Lincoln Avenue, Calumet City, Illinois 60409-4640 (a Polish national parish established in 1892), St. Victor Parish, 553 Hirsch Avenue, Calumet City, Illinois 60409-3517, (organized in 1925 in the northern part of Calumet City), and Our Lady of Knock Parish, 501 163rd Street, Calumet City, Illinois 60409-5944 (founded in 1957 and encompassing the southern part of Calumet City), met to plan their future. The three campuses, together with their churches, are all located within the nearly eight square miles of Calumet City; however, the parochial territory of St. Victor Parish extends west into South Holland, adding three square miles. 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).

First narrowing their consideration to two of four possible scenarios, the Grouping Team chose to recommend that the territories of St. Victor Parish and Our Lady of Knock Parish be combined, and that the three parishes of the Calumet City Grouping be united to form one new territorial parish. None of the three churches would be closed in the immediate future. However, in considering and adapting the report of the Grouping Team, the Commission recommended the ultimate closing of St. Victor Church due to its near proximity to St. Andrew the Apostle Church and the greater costs associated with the maintaining the St. Victor campus.

Other factors supporting the Commission's recommendation include the following:

- In 2017 the population of the area surrounding the three parishes had decreased by less than one percent from the 2010 census figures. The largest group is African-American, approximately 70% of the population, an overwhelmingly non-Catholic demographic. At approximately 18% is the second largest group, the predominately Catholic Hispanic population. The White population is nearly 12%. A significant percentage of the English worshippers at St. Andrew the Apostle Church are third and fourth generation Polish-Americans domiciled in the Diocese of Gary in Indiana.
- The recommended scenario presents a new parish with a stable and, perhaps, growing Hispanic population. Almost all this population attends the Spanish language Masses at St. Victor Church and Our Lady of Knock Church. However, the much smaller group of African American parishioners attends Our Lady of Knock Church.

- Reducing the number of pastorates and maintaining parochial staffs for one parish rather than three should reduce costs, promote other efficiencies, and allow for stable and competitive compensation.

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 unite St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, St. Victor Parish, and Our Lady of Knock Parish, all in Calumet City, Illinois, 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, St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, St. Victor Parish, and Our Lady of Knock Parish, all in Calumet City, Illinois, 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 Knock and SS. Andrew and Victor Parish;

2. The missions of the three extinguished parishes will be subsumed completely into the those of the newly established Our Lady of Knock and SS. Andrew and Victor Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the three extinguished parishes will be fully and equally parishioners of the new Our Lady of Knock and SS. Andrew and Victor Parish;

4. The territory of the new Our Lady of Knock and SS. Andrew and Victor Parish will be the combined territories of the former St. Victor Parish and the former Our Lady of Knock Parish, namely the territory located within these boundaries:

Start at the intersection of Bishop Ford Expressway and Dolton Road,
East on the south side of Dolton Road/State Street to Indiana State Line,
South along the west side of Indiana State Line to Kingery Expressway,
West on the north side of Kingery Expressway to Torrence Avenue,
North on the east side of Torrence Avenue to 159th Street,
West on the north side of 159th Street to Bishop Ford Expressway,
North on the east side of Bishop Ford Expressway to Dolton Road.

5. For at least the next year, the churches of all three parishes will remain open as parochial churches of the new Our Lady of Knock and SS. Andrew and Victor 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 three parishes, together with any obligations with

which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established Our Lady of Knock and SS. Andrew and Victor 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 St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, the extinguished St. Victor Parish, and the extinguished Our Lady of Knock 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 St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, St. Victor Parish, and Our Lady of Knock Parish, all in Calumet City, Illinois, 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 14th 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