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Prot. N. 2019 RMC-5

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. This decree concerns two parishes in the west suburban Village of Westchester: Divine Infant Jesus Parish, 1601 Newcastle Avenue, Westchester, Illinois 60154-4446, and Divine Providence Parish, 2550 Mayfair Avenue, Westchester, Illinois 60154-5098.

In 2018 the pastors, deacons, parochial school principals, and lay representatives from these two parishes, together with representatives from two other nearby parishes met in an RMC grouping to consider their future vitality. The Grouping Team presented a Community Engagement and Planning Feedback Summary dated May 1, 2018 to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group formed by lay and ordained representatives from across the archdiocese (see Submission of May 1, 2018, attached to this Decree).

With respect to the two parishes considered here, the Grouping Team and the Archdiocesan Commission recommended a scenario wherein the parishes would be united to form a single new parish. The union of Divine Infant Jesus Parish with Divine Providence Parish is supported by the data and arguments attached to this decree. Significant is the aggregate 55% decline in Sunday Mass attendance for the four parishes of the grouping over the past 20 years, and a corresponding 37% decline in the past ten years. This means that the union of the two parishes will result in a parish of a more reasonable size for future programming, evangelization, and development. The union will reduce the number of pastorates as well as the costs associated with maintaining two parochial staffs rather than one.

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, having before me the recommendations of the Grouping Team and those of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on September 12-13, 2018, at the University of St. Mary of the Lake-Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois. There, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Council's advice and now

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2019, Divine Infant Jesus Parish and Divine Providence Parish, both in the Village of Westchester, 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 Divine Infant Jesus and Divine Providence Parish;

2. The missions of the extinguished Divine Infant Jesus Parish and the extinguished Divine Providence Parish will be subsumed completely into the newly established Divine Infant Jesus and Divine Providence Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new Divine Infant Jesus and Divine Providence Parish;

4. The territory of the new Divine Infant Jesus and Divine Providence Parish will be the combined territories of the former Divine Infant Jesus Parish and the former Divine Providence Parish, namely the territory located within these boundaries:

Start at Roosevelt Road and east side of I-294 (Tri-State Tollway),
East on south side of Roosevelt Road to Mannheim Road.,
North on east side of Mannheim Road to Eisenhower Expressway.,
East on south side of Eisenhower Expressway to Gardner Road.,
South on west side of Gardner Road to Cermak Road,
East on south side of Cermak Road to Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad,
South on west side of Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad to Salt Creek,
East on north side of Salt Creek to LaGrange Road,
South on west side of LaGrange Road to 31st Street,
West on north side of 31st Street to I-294 (Tri-State Tollway),
North on west side of I-294 (Tri-State Tollway) to Roosevelt Road.

5. The churches of the extinguished Divine Infant Jesus Parish and the extinguished Divine Providence Parish will remain open as parochial churches of the new Divine Infant Jesus and Divine Providence 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 Divine Infant Jesus Parish and the extinguished Divine Providence Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established Divine Infant Jesus and Divine Providence 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 Divine Infant Jesus Parish and the extinguished Divine Providence 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 Divine Infant Jesus Parish and Divine Providence Parish, both in the Village of Westchester, and to their parishioners. Publication will be made through the parish bulletins, and generally on the archdiocesan website.


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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 12th day of February, A.D. 2019.
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,
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 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