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Prot. N. 2019 RMC-9

## 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 old vacant and underused parochial buildings and increasingly 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 ratio 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 arises out of the work of the four parishes of the 290 Corridor Grouping: Sacred Heart Parish (established 1893), 819 North 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Melrose Park, Illinois 60160-3828; St. Domitilla Parish (established 1920), 4940 Washington Street, Hillside, Illinois 60162-1200; St. Eulalia Parish (established 1927), 1845 South 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Maywood, Illinois 60153-3241; and St. Simeon Parish (established 1930), 430 Bohland Avenue, Bellwood, Illinois 60104-1400.

Throughout the Fall of 2018 lay representatives and the pastoral leadership of these institutions met in the *RMC* grouping to consider the future. The Grouping Team presented a Community Engagement and Planning Feedback Summary dated December 10, 2018, to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group of lay and ordained representatives from across the archdiocese (see Submission of December 10, 2018, attached to this Decree).

The commission's recommendations were conveyed to the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on January 15, 2019. They called for the union of Sacred Heart Parish, Melrose Park, and St. Eulalia Parish, Maywood, and for the union of St. Domitilla Parish, Hillside, with St. Simeon Parish, Bellwood, both unions to take effect July 1, 2019. This decree concerns the union of Sacred Heart Parish with St. Eulalia Parish.

The union of these two parishes is supported by the data and arguments attached to this decree. Significant is the fact that neither Sacred Heart Parish nor St. Eulalia Parish have annual operating revenue of at least \$750,000.00, the amount necessary to maintain vital parochial existence into the future. Moreover, despite significant increases in Mass attendance at each parish over the last five years, 54% at Sacred Heart, for a recent total attendance of 1,266 worshippers, and 21% at St. Eulalia, for a total of 460 worshippers, the prospects of increased revenue are not being seen. Indeed, St. Eulalia Parish has an accumulated debt of \$490,000.00, increasing by \$55,000.00 annually in the last two years. The union of the two parishes will result in one larger parish, one of a more reasonable size and capable of future programming, evangelization, and development. Significant financial savings are also expected from the requirement to maintain one parochial staff rather than two.

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 January 15, 2019, at Our Lady of Hope Parish in Rosemont, Illinois. There, after hearing the Presbyteral Council, noting the council's vote on the same recommendations, and invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Council's advice and

***decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2019, Sacred Heart Parish, Melrose Park, and St. Eulalia Parish, Maywood, 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 Sacred Heart and St. Eulalia Parish;

2. The missions of the extinguished Sacred Heart Parish and the extinguished St. Eulalia Parish will be subsumed completely into the newly established Sacred Heart and St. Eulalia Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new Sacred Heart and St. Eulalia Parish;

4. The territory of the new Sacred Heart and St. Eulalia Parish will be the combined territories of the former Sacred Heart Parish and the former St. Eulalia Parish, namely the territory located within these boundaries:

Start at Armitage Avenue and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Melrose Park,  
East on extension of Armitage Avenue and Armitage Avenue to Des Plaines River,  
South on west side of Des Plaines River to Canadian National Railroad,  
West on north side of Canadian National Railroad to Gardner Road,  
North on east side of Gardner Road to I-290 (Eisenhower Expressway),  
East on center line of I-290 (Eisenhower Expressway) to Bellwood/Maywood  
Municipal line,  
North on east side of Bellwood/Maywood Municipal line to Canadian National Railroad,  
West on north side of Canadian National Railroad to 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue.,  
North on east side of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Armitage Avenue.

5. The churches of the extinguished Sacred Heart Parish and the extinguished St. Eulalia Parish will be parish churches of the new Sacred Heart and St. Eulalia 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 Sacred Heart Parish and those of the extinguished St. Eulalia Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established Sacred Heart and St. Eulalia Parish (see canon 121);

7. The documents presented to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of January 15, 2019, will be attached to this decree;

8. In due course, the sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the extinguished Sacred Heart Parish and the extinguished St. Eulalia

Prot. N. 2019 RMC-9  
Decree  
February 28, 2019  
Page 4

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 Sacred Heart Parish, Melrose Park, and St. Eulalia Parish, Maywood, and to their parishioners. Publication will be made through the parish bulletins, and 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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