



Office of the Archbishop  
835 North Rush Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312.534.8230  
archchicago.org

Prot. N. 2019 RMC-10

## 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 St. Domitilla Parish with St. Simeon Parish.

The union of these two parishes is supported by the data and arguments attached to this decree. Significant is the fact that neither St. Domitilla Parish nor St. Simeon Parish have annual operating revenue of at least \$750,000.00, the amount considered necessary to maintain vital parochial existence into the future. Moreover, despite the 29% increase in Mass attendance at St. Domitilla Parish over the last five years, St. Simeon Parish has had a 41% decrease to about 325 worshippers per Sunday. Prospects of increased revenue are not being seen for these parishes as constituted, and St. Simeon Parish has an accumulated debt of \$260,057.00, augmented by the recent annual operating deficit of \$111,834.00, and \$84,207.00 in operating aid. 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 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, hearing the Presbyteral Council, noting the Council's deliberations and its vote on the same recommendations, and after invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Council's advice and

***decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2019, St. Domitilla Parish, Hillside, and St. Simeon Parish, Bellwood, 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 SS. Simeon and Domitilla Parish;
2. The missions of the extinguished St. Domitilla Parish and the extinguished St. Simeon Parish will be subsumed completely into the newly established SS. Simeon and Domitilla Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new SS. Simeon and Domitilla Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Simeon and Domitilla Parish will be the combined territories of the former St. Domitilla Parish and the former St. Simeon Parish, namely the territory located within these boundaries:  
  
Start at C & NW RR tracks (south side of Proviso Freight Yard) and Cook County Line (approximately at Tri-State Tollway, I-294) and along the I-290 extension, East on south side of C & NW RR tracks to Maywood-Bellwood municipal boundary, South along west side of Maywood-Bellwood city limits (between 21st and 22nd Avenues) to Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), West on north side of Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) to Mannheim Road, South on west side of Mannheim Road to Roosevelt Road, West along north side of Roosevelt Road to Heldorn Avenue, South on center line of Heldorn Avenue to Canterbury Street (Hawthorne extension), West on north side of Hawthorne extension (south side of Queen of Heaven Cemetery) and Hawthorne to Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and Cook County Line, North on west side of Cook County Line (approximately at Tri-State Tollway) to C & NW RR tracks (south side of Proviso Freight Yard).
5. The churches of the extinguished St. Domitilla Parish and the extinguished St. Simeon Parish be churches of the new SS. Simeon and Domitilla 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 St. Domitilla Parish and those of the extinguished St. Simeon Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established SS. Simeon and Domitilla 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;

Prot. N. 2019 RMC-10  
Decree  
March 8, 2019  
Page 4

8. In due course, the sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the extinguished St. Domitilla Parish and the extinguished St. Simeon 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. Domitilla Parish, Hillside, and St. Simeon Parish, Bellwood, 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 8<sup>th</sup> day of March, 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