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Prot. N. 2019 RMC-19

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 far 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. Many 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.

More than 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. This decree arises out of planning regarding four parishes, all located within a territory of approximately six square miles in the Exchange Grouping of the South Shore neighborhood of the City of Chicago. The decree is applicable to two parishes in the Grouping: Immaculate Conception Parish (established 1882 to serve Polish-speaking Catholics in South Chicago), 2944 East 88th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60617 3242; and St. Michael Parish (established 1892 for Polish-speaking Catholics within the then territory of Immaculate Conception Parish), 8235 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60617-2152.

In 2017 the pastoral leadership and lay representatives from the four parishes met in the RMC grouping to consider their future. The Grouping Team presented a Community Engagement and Planning Feedback Summary dated November 27, 2017, to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group of lay and ordained representatives from across the archdiocese (see Submission of November 27, 2017, attached to this Decree).

The recommendation of the Commission was conveyed to the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on November 26, 2018, at Our Lady of Hope Parish, Rosemont, Illinois. The recommendations pertaining to this decree provided for the union of Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Michael Parish, establishing a new parish, taking territory from the adjacent St. Bride Parish, (established originally as a mission 1893, later as a parish 1900), 7811 South Coles Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60649-4807. The union would be effective from July 1, 2019. The union of the parishes is supported by the data and arguments attached to this decree. Significant is that both parishes serve a Spanish-speaking Catholic population. Neither of the two parishes meets the recommended minimum annual operating income of \$750,000.00. Moreover, Sunday Mass attendance at both parishes is less than the 800 minimum our studies believe necessary for a viable parish in this archdiocese. Also, attendance at Immaculate Conception Parish is decreasing

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canons 50-51, 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 November 26, 2018, at Our Lady of Hope Parish, Rosemont, Illinois. There, I heard the Presbyteral Council, noted the Council's deliberations, and witnessed the Council's vote on the matter. Thereafter, having invoked the Holy Spirit, I

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2019, Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Michael Parish, both in the South Shore neighborhood of the City of Chicago 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 Immaculate Conception and St. Michael Parish;

2. The ministries of the two extinguished parishes will be subsumed into the work of the newly established Immaculate Conception and St. Michael Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new Immaculate Conception and St. Michael Parish;

4. The territory of the new Immaculate Conception and St. Michael Parish will be the territory of the extinguished Immaculate Conception Parish added to territory taken from St. Bride Parish, namely, that located within these boundaries:

Start at the intersection of 82nd Street and Yates Boulevard,
East along the south side of 82nd Street and extension of 82nd Street to Lake Michigan,
South along Lake Michigan to the Calumet River,
Southwest along the northwest side of the Calumet River to 100th Street,
West along the north side of 100th Street to Torrence Avenue,
North along the east side of Torrence Avenue to 95th Street,
West along the north side of 95th Street to Yates Boulevard,
North along the east side of Yates Boulevard to 82nd Street.

5. The churches of the extinguished Immaculate Conception Parish and of the extinguished St. Michael Parish will remain open as parochial churches of the new Immaculate Conception and St. Michael 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 Immaculate Conception Parish and the extinguished St. Michael Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established Immaculate Conception and St. Michael Parish (see canon 121);

7. The documents given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of November 26, 2018, will be attached to this decree;

8. In due course, the sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the extinguished Immaculate Conception Parish and the extinguished St. Michael 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

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9. Notification of this decree will be given immediately to the pastoral leadership of Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Michael Parish, both in the South Shore 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 [appeal] may be taken against this decree, a petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be delivered to me at my office within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).

Given this 26th day of April, 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 MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL ARE
ATTACHED TO THIS DECREE AND AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FROM
THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS