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Prot. N. 2020 RMC-4

## 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 2,705,994 in 2018. 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 5,881,250 in 2018. The 2018 *Annuario Pontificio* indicates our archdiocese had 345 parishes serving a Catholic population of 2,512,000: an average of 7,281 Catholics per parish. According to the same source, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a total population of 11,519,517, with 287 parishes for a Catholic population of 4,362,000: an average 15,199 Catholics per parish. For the Archdiocese of New York, the figures are 2,656,987 Catholics in 294 parishes: an average 9,037 Catholics per parish. 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 have been receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. From fiscal year 2012 through fiscal year 2019 the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$162,332,527.00 in support to parishes and Catholic schools: \$42,620,585.00 to 106 parishes and \$119,712,942.00 to 83 Catholic schools. This was entirely due to the generosity of the people of the archdiocese and other donors. The archdiocese cannot and should not continue this level of financial support for parishes and Catholic schools that are struggling and supported by populations that have been decreasing. Instead, our mission is to reconfigure our parishes to become more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. To achieve this hope, the parishes must have a growing or stable membership and the capacity to support themselves when possible.

Five 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 process aimed at obtaining and preserving the vitality of our parishes. It has been 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 the future. We are identifying parishes likely to be reconfigured through pastoral coordination with neighboring parishes, divisions, unions, and other significant alterations.

This decree concerns three parishes within an area of approximately one square mile in the Southside Chicago neighborhood of East Little Village (*Villita Oriental*): Assumption Parish (established 1903 for Slovak-speaking Catholics), 2434 South California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60608-4604; St. Roman Parish (established 1928 for Polish-speaking Catholics), 2311 South Washtenaw Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60608-3615); and Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish (formed in 1990 from the extinctive union of two former personal parishes) 2226 South Whipple Street, Chicago, Illinois 60623-3425. None of these parishes was organized with stable territorial boundaries and all three are within the boundaries of Epiphany Parish, the local territorial parish, whose church is located at 2524 South Keeler Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60623-3609. This address is approximately 1.25 miles west of the western boundary of the parish proposed by this decree. In recent decades the parishes have been serving a population of mostly Spanish-speaking Catholics, many immigrants from Mexico. Indeed, more than 85% of those attending Sunday Mass at these parishes attend a Spanish Mass.

Throughout 2019, the pastoral leadership and lay representatives from the three parishes, met in an *RMC* grouping to consider the future vitality of their area of the archdiocese. The Grouping Team 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. With respect to the three parishes, the Commission proposed that Assumption Parish, St. Roman Parish, and Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish be extinguished as separate juridic persons and united to form a single new juridic person, a territorial parish with territory taken from the neighboring Epiphany Parish.

The proposal is supported by the data and arguments mentioned herein or attached to this decree. Significant is the aggregate 36% decline in Sunday Mass attendance over the past 20 years. Recent Sunday Mass attendance has been 471 at Assumption Parish, 640 at St. Roman Parish, and 1,049 at Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish. Sunday Mass attendance at Assumption Parish and St. Roman Parish is below the minimum of 800 recommended for vitality in this archdiocese. The total aggregate operating income of the three parishes in fiscal year 2018 was \$1,141,323.00, including rental income. Only Our Lady of Tepeyac had a 2018 operating deficit, resulting in an aggregate deficit of \$80,905.00.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me a proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission that Assumption Parish, St. Roman Parish, and Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish, all in East Little Village on the Southside of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as separate juridic

persons and united to form a single new juridic person, a territorial parish with the territory taken from the neighboring Epiphany Parish. Further know that I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on November 5, 2019, at St. Monica Parish, Chicago, Illinois, and there, after hearing the Presbyteral Council, receiving its vote of 35 for and none against the proposal, and invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now I

***decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2020, the above-mentioned Assumption Parish, St. Roman Parish, and Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish, will be extinguished as separate juridic persons and united to form a single new juridic person, a territorial parish to be known, *ad interim*, as Our Lady of Tepeyac, Assumption, and St. Roman Parish;

2. The missions of the three extinguished parishes will be subsumed completely into that of the new of Our Lady of Tepeyac, Assumption, and St. Roman Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the three extinguished parishes and the faithful residing within the territorial boundaries of the new parish will become parishioners of the new Our Lady of Tepeyac, Assumption, and St. Roman Parish;

4. The territory of the new Our Lady of Tepeyac, Assumption, and St. Roman Parish will be that taken from the territory of the neighboring Epiphany Parish, namely the territory with these boundaries:

Start at the southeast corner of Kedzie Avenue and C.B. & Q RR tracks,  
East/Northeast along south side of C. B. & Q RR tracks to Rockwell Street (2600 West),  
South on west side of Rockwell Street and extension of Rockwell Street to Sanitary and Ship Canal,  
Southwest along Sanitary and Ship Canal to Kedzie Avenue,  
North on east side of Kedzie Avenue to C.B. & Q RR tracks.

5. The new territory of Epiphany Parish will then be that within her remaining boundaries:

Start at extension of Cullerton Street and city limits (Belt Line RR 4600 West),  
East on extension of Cullerton Street and south side of Cullerton Street to Pulaski Avenue,  
South on west side of Pulaski Avenue to C.B. & Q RR tracks,  
East/Northeast along south side of C. B. & Q RR tracks to Kedzie Avenue,  
South on west side of Kedzie Avenue to Sanitary and Ship Canal,  
Southwest along Sanitary and Ship Canal to city limits (Belt Line RR 4600 West),  
North on east side of city limits to extension of Cullerton Street.

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 former parishes, together with any

obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the new Our Lady of Tepeyac, Assumption, and St. Roman Parish (see canon 121);

7. The churches of the former Assumption Parish, St. Roman Parish, and Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish will be churches of the new Our Lady of Tepeyac, Assumption, and St. Roman Parish, retaining their own titles, and Our Lady of Tepeyac Church will be the parish church of the new parish;

8. The documents given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of November 5, 2019, will be attached to this decree;

9. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the three former parishes will be collected and maintained at Our Lady of Tepeyac Church, unless otherwise determined by the expert staff of the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago;

10. Notification of this decree will be given immediately to the pastoral leadership of Assumption Parish, St. Roman Parish, and Our Lady of Tepeyac Parish, all in the East Little Village neighborhood, to the pastor of Epiphany Parish, and to the parishioners of the each of these four parishes. 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 within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).*

Given this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of January, A.D. 2020.  
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago



*For the*  
Chancellor



*Associate Vicar for Canonical Affairs*

Attachments

ONCE AVAILABLE, THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF  
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF  
THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 5, 2019,  
WILL BE ATTACHED TO THIS DECREE AND AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST  
FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS