



Prot. N. 2020 RMC-12

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. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2019 these subsidies amounted to \$160,014,332.00, including \$40,039,909.00 to 115 parishes, and \$119,974,423.00 to 93 Catholic schools. This was entirely due to the generosity of the faithful of the archdiocese and other donors. We cannot continue this level of financial support for parishes and Catholic schools, especially while the number of those contributing to the support of their parishes increasingly declines. 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 have a growing or stable membership and the ability to support themselves whenever 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, intentional process aimed at obtaining and preserving the vitality of our parishes. It has



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been my intention that every parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago will 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 are identifying parishes likely to be reconfigured through pastoral coordination with neighboring parishes, divisions, unions, and other significant alterations.

This decree concerns two neighboring parishes: St. Rita of Cascia Parish in the Chicago Lawn neighborhood of the City of Chicago (originally established in 1905 by the Augustinian friars, along with a high school for boys, separated from the high school in 1911), 6243 South Fairfield Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60629, and St. Clare of Montefalco Parish in the Gage Park neighborhood (originally established 1909 as a mission from St. Rita of Cascia Parish and made a parish 1916), 5443 South Washtenaw Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60632. Today these parishes serve a predominately Spanish-speaking faithful in a mixed Hispanic and African American neighborhood. For several months in 2019 the pastoral leadership and lay representatives from these parishes met in an *RMC* grouping made up of five parishes. They considered 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. Regarding these two parishes, a proposal came forth to be put before the Presbyteral Council, that St. Clare of Montefalco Parish be dissolved as a separate juridic person in the Church and wholly united with St. Rita of Cascia Parish, with St. Rita of Cascia Church designated the parish church.

The proposal is supported by the data and arguments mentioned herein or attached to this decree. Significant is the nearly 21% increase in regular Sunday Mass attendance for St. Rita of Cascia Parish over the last five years and a corresponding 34% decline in Sunday Mass attendance in St. Clare of Montefalco Parish over the same period. The most recent figures available indicate an average attendance of 1,087 at St. Rita of Cascia and 1050 at St. Clare of Montefalco. However, figures for parish annual ordinary operating income, not including rental income, show \$325,658.00 for St. Rita of Cascia and \$260,297.00 for St. Clare of Montefalco, both below the needed \$750,000.00 for continued viability in the archdiocese. These realities coexist with continuing decline in the number of priests available to pastor our parishes.

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, having before me a proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission that St. Clare of Montefalco Parish be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and united to St. Rita of Cascia Parish, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on January 27-28, 2020, at Mundelein Seminary of the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois. There, after hearing the Presbyteral Council, receiving its vote of 34 for and none against the proposal, and invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now

decree the following:



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1. Effective July 1, 2020, St. Clare of Montefalco Parish in the City of Chicago will be dissolved as a separate juridic person in the Church and wholly united to its original mother parish, St. Rita of Cascia Parish in the City of Chicago;

2. The mission of the former St. Clare of Montefalco Parish will be subsumed completely into the mission of St. Rita of Cascia Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the present St. Clare of Montefalco Parish are to be fully and equally parishioners of St. Rita of Cascia Parish;

4. The territory of the parish will be the existing territory of St. Rita of Cascia Parish and part of the territory of St. Clare of Montefalco Parish, the remaining part being assigned to St. Gall Parish. St. Rita of Cascia Parish will have the territory within these boundaries:

Start at 53rd Street and Sacramento Avenue,
East on the south side of 53rd Street to Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad tracks at 2200 West,
South on west side of B & O CT Railroad tracks to Marquette Road (67th Street),
West on the north side of Marquette Road (67th Street) to Kedzie Avenue,
North on the east side of Kedzie Avenue to 59th Street,
East on the south side of 59th Street to Sacramento Avenue,
North on the east side of Sacramento Avenue to 53rd Street.

5. The church of the former St. Clare of Montefalco Parish and the church of St. Rita of Cascia Parish will both be churches of St. Rita of Cascia Parish, retaining their titles, and St. Rita of Cascia Church will be designated the parish church of the parish;

6. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the former St. Clare of Montefalco Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of St. Rita of Cascia Parish (see canon 121);

7. The documents given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of January 27-28, 2020, will be attached to this decree;

8. Unless otherwise determined by professional staff of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the former St. Clare of Montefalco Parish will be collected and maintained by St. Rita of Cascia Parish;

9. Notification of this decree will be given immediately to the pastoral leadership of St. Clare of Montefalco Parish and St. Rita of Cascia Parish, and to the parishioners of the two parishes. Notice will be made on the archdiocesan website and through the parish bulletins or other suitable means available to each parish.



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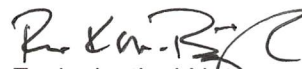
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Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).

Given this 15th day of May, A.D. 2020.
From the Archbishop's Office,
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 PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 27-28, 2020,
WILL BE ATTACHED TO THIS DECREE AND, WHEN READY,
AVAILABLE THROUGH THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS