



Prot. N. 2020 RMC-13

## 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 four neighboring parishes located in an area of approximately six square miles in the far Southeast section of the City of Chicago: St. Kevin Parish (established 1884), 10509 South Torrence Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60617; St. Francis de Sales Parish (established 1888), 10201 South Ewing Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60617; St. George Parish (established 1903 for Slovenian-speaking faithful), 9546 South Ewing Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60617; and Annunciata Parish (established 1941), 11128 South Avenue G, Chicago, Illinois 60617. For several months in 2019 the pastoral leadership and lay representatives from these parishes met in an *RMC* grouping to consider the future 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. The Commission's proposal to be put before the Presbyteral Council was that the four parishes be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new territorial parish, with Annunciata Church designated the parish church.

The proposal is supported by the data and arguments mentioned herein or attached to this decree. Significant is the fact that each of the four parishes now serves a significant if not majority Spanish-speaking population. There has been an 11% decline in regular Sunday Mass attendance for St. Kevin Parish over the last five years and a corresponding 19% decline in Sunday Mass attendance at Annunciata Parish over the same period. Also, there has been a 122% increase in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Francis de Sales Parish and a 13% increase at St. George Parish over the same five year period. The most recent figures available indicate an average Sunday attendance of 601 worshippers at St. Kevin, 671 at Annunciata, 969 at St. Francis de Sales, and 223 at St. George. Only one parish has a sustained Sunday attendance of 800 or more, the number needed for continued viability in Chicago. Moreover, recent figures for annual parish operating income, not including rental income, are \$222,259.00 for St. Kevin, \$204,830.00 for St. Francis de Sales, \$140,278.00 for St. George, and \$460,290.00 for Annunciata, all below the \$750,000.00 minimum required to sustain a parish. These realities coexist with a 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 the proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission that St. Kevin Parish, St. Francis de Sales Parish, St. George (Slovenian) Parish, and Annunciata Parish, all in the far Southeast area of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new territorial parish, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on January





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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 33 for and none against the proposal, and invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now

***decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2020, St. Kevin Parish, St. Francis de Sales Parish, St. George (Slovenian) Parish, and Annunciata Parish, all in the far Southeast section of the City of Chicago, are extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new territorial parish to be called, *ad interim*, Annunciata and SS. George, Kevin, and Francis de Sales Parish;

2. The missions of the four former parishes will be subsumed completely into the mission of the new Annunciata and SS. George, Kevin, and Francis de Sales Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the four parishes to be united are to be fully and equally parishioners of the new Annunciata and SS. George, Kevin, and Francis de Sales Parish;

4. The territory of the new parish will be the combined territories of St. Kevin Parish, St. Francis de Sales Parish, and Annunciata Parish, namely the territory within these boundaries:

Start at 100<sup>th</sup> Street and Stony Island Avenue,  
East on south side of 100<sup>th</sup> Street to Calumet River,  
North and northeast along the east side of Calumet River to Lake Michigan,  
South along Lake Michigan to Illinois-Indiana border,  
South along west side of Illinois-Indiana border to 118<sup>th</sup> Street,  
East on north side of 118<sup>th</sup> Street to Calumet River,  
South along the north side of the Calumet River to 130<sup>th</sup> Street,  
West on the north side of 130<sup>th</sup> to the Bishop Ford Expressway (I-94),  
North along the east side of the Bishop Ford Expressway to extension of 110<sup>th</sup> Street,  
East along the south side of 110<sup>th</sup> Street and extension of 110<sup>th</sup> Street Stony Island Avenue,  
Northwest along Stony Island Avenue to extension of 100<sup>th</sup> Street and 100<sup>th</sup> Street.

5. The churches of the former St. Kevin Parish, the former St. Francis de Sales Parish, the former St. George (Slovenian) Parish, and of the former Annunciata Parish will be churches of the new Annunciata and SS. George, Kevin, and Francis de Sales Parish, retaining their titles, and Annunciata Church will be designated the parish church of the new parish;

6. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of each of the four parishes to be united, together with



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any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the newly established Annunciata and SS. George, Kevin, and Francis de Sales 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 four parishes to be united will be collected and maintained at the campus of Annunciata Church;

9. Notification of this decree will be given immediately to the pastoral leadership of St. Kevin Parish, St. Francis de Sales Parish, St. George (Slovenian) Parish, and Annunciata Parish, and to the parishioners of these four parishes. Notice will be made on the archdiocesan website and through the parish bulletins or other suitable means available to each parish.

*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 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, A.D. 2020.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois



*Francis Cardinal George*  
Archbishop of Chicago

*R. Kar Ryl*  
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