



Prot. N. 2020 RMC-16

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 three neighboring parishes and a mission, all located within an area of approximately three square miles on the Northside of the City of Chicago: St. Henry Parish (established personal parish for German-speaking faithful 1851, now a territorial parish), 6335 North Hoyne Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659; St. Margaret Mary Parish (established 1921), 2324 West Chase Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60645; St. Timothy Parish (established 1925), 6326 North Washtenaw Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659; and Blessed Aloysius Stepinac Croatian Catholic Mission (established 1972 in the former Angel Guardian Church), 6346 North Ridge Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60660. For several months in 2019 the pastoral leadership and lay representatives from the three parishes and the mission 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 mission retain its separate juridic status and the three parishes be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new territorial parish, with St. Margaret Mary 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 over the last 20 years there has been a 213% increase in regular Sunday Mass attendance for St. Henry Parish, overwhelmingly of Vietnamese origin. However, over the same period there has been a corresponding decline of 68% at St. Margaret Mary Parish, 46% decline at St. Timothy Parish, and 34% at the Croatian Catholic Mission. The recent average Sunday Mass attendance was reported to be 1,106 at St. Henry, 504 at St. Margaret Mary, 437 at St. Timothy, and 292 at the mission. The minimum Sunday attendance at a parish of this archdiocese should be 800. Furthermore, recent figures of annual parish operating income at St. Henry was \$755,309.00, compared to \$484,751.00 at St. Margaret Mary and \$207,822 at St. Timothy. Here a parish needs a minimum of \$750,000.00 in annual operating income to support itself. These realities coexist with a continuing decrease in the Catholic population of the area and an ongoing 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, have before me the proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission that St. Henry Parish, St. Margaret Mary Parish, and St. Timothy Parish, all on the Northside of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new territorial parish. Consequently, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on January 27-28, 2020, at



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Mundelein Seminary of the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois. There, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and its vote of 34 for and 0 against the proposal of extinctive union and invoking the Holy Spirit, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2020, St. Henry Parish, St. Margaret Mary Parish, and St. Timothy Parish, all in the City of Chicago, will be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new territorial parish to be called, *ad interim*, SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish;

2. The missions of the three former parishes will be subsumed completely into the mission of the new SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the three parishes to be united are to be fully and equally parishioners of the new SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish;

4. The territory of the new parish will be the combined territories of three united parishes, namely, the territory described as follows:

Start at Howard Street and Sanitary Canal,
East on south side of Howard Street to Damen Avenue,
South on west side of Damen to Pratt Boulevard,
East on south side of Pratt Boulevard to C & NW Railroad at Ravenswood Avenue,
South on C & NW RR to Peterson Avenue,
West on north side of Peterson Avenue to North Shore Channel,
North along east side of North Shore Channel to Howard Street

5. The churches of the former St. Henry Parish, the former St. Margaret Mary Parish, and the former St. Timothy Parish will be churches of the new SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish, each retaining its title, and St. Margaret Mary 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 three parishes to be united, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will become those of the new SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish (see canon 121);

7. The pastoral leadership of the new SS. Timothy, Henry, and Margaret Mary Parish will continue collaboration with the pastoral leadership of Blessed Aloysius Stepinac Croatian Catholic Mission. To foster mutually beneficial sharing of pastoral resources and ideas between the new parish and the mission, a yearly report will be made to the area episcopal vicar;

8. 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;



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9. 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 three parishes to be united will be collected and maintained at the campus of St. Margaret Mary Church; and


10. Notification of this decree will be given immediately to the pastoral leadership of St. Henry Parish, St. Margaret Mary Parish, St. Timothy Parish, and Blessed Aloysius Stepinac Croatian Catholic Mission, and to the faithful of the three parishes and the mission. Notice will be made on the archdiocesan website and through the bulletins or other suitable means available to each parish and the mission

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 5th day of June, A.D. 2020.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
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