



Office of the Archbishop  
835 North Rush Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312.534.8230  
archchicago.org

Prot. N. 2021 RMC-32

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

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 fell by nearly 21% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,693,976 in 2020. During the last decade, the total population of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) declined by less than 2%, from 5,903,190 in 2010 to an estimated 5,821,933 in 2020. Over the same ten-year period the Catholic population of the Archdiocese of Chicago declined by nearly 7% (159,000), from 2,338,000 to 2,179,000.

A good number of our parishes were founded in the first half of the 20th Century or earlier. Many were established for national, linguistic, or ethnic groups that no longer reside in the archdiocese or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished. Today, many of our parishes are unable or struggling to support themselves. Consequently, from Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2020, the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$177,109,682.00 in support to parishes and Catholic schools: \$46,332,584.00 to 106 parishes and \$130,777,098.00 to 83 Catholic schools. This includes \$14,777,155.00 during Fiscal Year 2020 alone: \$3,711,999.00 to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 to Catholic schools, mostly parochial schools. Completely due to the generosity of the faithful people of the archdiocese and other gracious donors, these subsidies cannot continue at this high level. Our mission is to convert our parishes, helping them to become more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. For this mission, the parishes need a growing and stable membership and the financial means to support themselves.

More than six years ago, inspired by the experience of St. Francis of Assisi before the cross of the ruined church of San Damiano and the Holy Father's dream of "a missionary option ... capable of transforming everything" (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27, November 24, 2013), and with wide and continuing consultation among the clergy and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Chicago, particularly in the Presbyteral Council, we embarked on the inauguration of *Renew My Church (RMC)*. This is our multi-year process aimed at converting our parishes for mission. It is my intention that every parish join with some of its neighbors (groupings) to plan the future. Careful planning will create a menu of possibilities. We are identifying parishes to be reconfigured through pastoral coordination with neighboring parishes, divisions, unions, and other structural and governance changes.

This decree concerns the extinctive union of one parish in the West Town neighborhood of the City of Chicago. The parish to be extinguished and united with its neighbor is St. Aloysius

Prot. N. 2021 RMC-32

Decree

November 22, 2021

Page 2

Parish (established 1884 as a personal parish for faithful of German origins), 1510 North Claremont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622-1710. It is to be received into the recently formed Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish (established July 1, 2021), 2315 West Augusta Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois. To facilitate the union of the non-territorial parish of St. Aloysius Parish with Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish, some territory will be taken from St. Mary of the Angels Parish, 1850 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622-1191.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Aloysius Parish was 621 (64% Spanish, 36% English). The Sunday attendance at the parish in late 2019 was a decline of 14% over five years (from 726 to 621), 19% over 10 years (from 765 to 621), and 35% over 20 years (from 951 to 621).

In Fiscal Year 2019 St. Aloysius Parish had an operating deficit of \$42,160.00. The operating deficit in Fiscal Year 2020 was \$113,814.00, almost 2.7 times the operating deficit for Fiscal Year 2019. In Fiscal Year 2020 there was no parish debt and savings of only \$58,847.00 (half the year's operating deficit). In March 2021 the capital needs of the parish were \$642,580.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Aloysius Parish included 23 funerals, five marriages, and 54 Baptisms.

Following recent consultations with lay and clergy members of both parishes, including input from parishioners at large, a report was submitted to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group of lay and clergy representatives from across the Archdiocese of Chicago, together with a letter from the pastor of both parishes, the Reverend Claudio Diaz, Jr., requesting extinctive union. The *Renew My Church* Executive Committee submitted its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to continuing decline in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Aloysius Parish, significant capital needs at both parishes, and fewer priests, change is needed. The Church in this area will struggle financially and administratively to sustain more than one parish. If the care of souls, evangelization, and discipleship are to be the focus of future mission, the consolidation and conservation of resources under the leadership of a single pastor, one already serving both parishes, is needed.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 121, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law has before me a proposal that the above-mentioned St. Aloysius Parish in the City of Chicago, be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and united with the neighboring Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territorial boundaries of Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish and a portion of territory taken from the adjacent St. Mary of the Angels Parish, with St. Helen Church designated the parish church of the new parish. Upon the effective date of the union, the parish will be called Our Lady of Unity Parish. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago via the internet on October 14, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 28 for and one against the proposal, I accepted

the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective January 1, 2022, the above-mentioned St. Aloysius Parish shall be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and united with Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish, with the addition to the new parish of a portion of territory taken from the adjacent St. Mary of the Angels Parish. The new parish is to be named Our Lady of Unity Parish;
2. The ministries of the two former parishes will be subsumed into those of the new Our Lady of Unity Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two former parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new Our Lady of Unity Parish;
4. The territory of the new Our Lady of Unity Parish will be as depicted and described on the map and in the document that will be attached to this decree;
5. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the two former parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new Our Lady of Unity Parish (canon 121);
6. The church of the extinguished St. Aloysius Parish and those of the former Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish will be churches of the new Our Lady of Unity Parish, retaining their own titles, and St. Helen Church shall be designated the parish church of the new parish;
7. Once approved, the data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of October 14, 2021, will be attached to this decree and available upon request to those eligible to receive them;
8. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the extinguished parish of St. Aloysius will be collected and maintained at the St. Helen Church campus, unless otherwise determined by the expert staff of the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago; and
9. Notification of this decree shall be given immediately through the official website of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The decree shall be conveyed to the common pastor of St. Aloysius Parish and Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish. As soon as possible, the pastor shall inform his parishioners of the decree through the parish bulletins or other suitable means.

Prot. N. 2021 RMC-32  
Decree  
November 22, 2021  
Page 4

*Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, and signed petition, asking me to revoke or amend the decree, must be sent or delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop of Chicago, Archbishop Quigley Center, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.*

Given this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November, A.D. 2021.  
From Holy Name Cathedral,  
Chicago, Illinois

*Sean Cardinal Cyprian*  
Archbishop of Chicago



*Rev. Robert Feslele*  
Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

ONCE APPROVED FOR RELEASE, THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL  
COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF THE  
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF OCTOBER 14, 2021, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE  
FOREGOING DECREE AND AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS  
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM