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Prot. N. 2022 RMC-8

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 2021, the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$187,818,176.00 in support to parishes and Catholic schools: \$49,452,924.00 to 119 parishes and \$138,365,252 to 99 Catholic schools. This includes \$10,708,494.00 during Fiscal Year 2021 alone: \$3,120,340.00 to parishes and \$7,588,154.00 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 two adjacent parishes located in the northwest side of the City of Chicago and in Harwood Heights, Illinois: St. Monica Parish (established 1948), 5136 North

Nottingham Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60656-3696; and St. Rosalie Parish (established 1960), 4401 North Oak Park Avenue, Harwood Heights, Illinois 60706-4835. The churches of the two parishes are approximately one and one-third miles apart, a drive of four to five minutes. Together the parishes occupy a territory of approximately two and one-half square miles. The Pauline Fathers have staffed St. Rosalie Parish since 2002.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Monica 1,551, a 32% decline from the 2,265 attending in Fiscal Year 2000. The same year, the average Sunday attendance at St. Rosalie Parish was 839, a 34% decline from the 1,273 attending in Fiscal Year 2000. In October 2021, average attendance at St. Monica Parish was 999, while at St. Rosalie Parish it was 840. In October 2019, 64% of those attending Sunday Mass at St. Monica Parish attended the English Masses, while 36% attended the Polish Masses. That same month, the attendance at St. Rosalie Parish was 39% English and 61% Polish.

In Fiscal Year 2021, St. Monica Parish had an operating surplus of \$149,825.00. In Fiscal Year 2020 there was an operating surplus of \$43,170.00, and an operating surplus of \$52,536.00 in Fiscal Year 2019. In October 2021 the parish had savings of \$238,424.00 on deposit, church debt of \$232,534.00, and no recent formal assessment of capital needs. By contrast, St. Rosalie Parish had operating deficits of \$19,909.00 in Fiscal Year 2021, \$89,294.00 in Fiscal Year 2020, and \$61,471.00 in Fiscal Year 2019. St. Rosalie Parish had savings of \$49,276.00 in October 2021, no debt, and estimated capital needs of \$983,250.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Monica Parish included 55 funerals, five marriages, and 51 Baptisms. In the same period there were 34 funerals, two marriages, and nine Baptisms at St. Rosalie Parish. The combined total of 89 funerals, seven marriages, and 60 Baptisms, suggests an aging population with fewer than the desired number of younger families.

Following consultations last year with lay and clergy members of the 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. Recently, the *Renew My Church* Executive Committee submitted a recommendation to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to a continuing decline in the number of priests to serve as pastors, including difficulty in meeting operating budgets, especially at St. Rosalie Parish, and significant capital needs, 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 and pastoral team 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, 2, 2°, & 3, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me a proposal that the above-mentioned St. Monica Parish in Chicago and St. Rosalie Parish in Harwood Heights, Illinois, be extinguished as separate juridic

persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the combined territories of St. Monica Parish and St. Rosalie Parish named, *ad interim*, St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish. St. Monica Church is to be designated the parish church. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago electronically *via* the internet on December 21, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 34 for and five against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

I decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2022, the above-mentioned St. Monica Parish and St. Rosalie Parish shall be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the combined territories of the two parishes. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish;

2. The ministries of the two extinguished parishes will become those of the new St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the two extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish;

4. The territory of the new St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish will be the combined territories of the extinguished St. Monica Parish and the extinguished St. Rosalie Parish as depicted and described on the map and in the document 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 extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish (canon 121);

6. The churches of the extinguished St. Monica Parish and the extinguished St. Rosalie Parish will be churches of the new St. Monica and St. Rosalie Parish, retaining their own titles. St. Monica Church shall be designated the parish church of the new parish;

7. The data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of December 21, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

8. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the two extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the St. Monica Church campus, unless otherwise determined by the expert staff of the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago; and

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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 pastors of St. Monica Parish and St. Rosalie Parish. As soon as possible, the pastors shall inform their parishioners of the decree through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

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 14th day of March, A.D. 2022.
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
DECEMBER 21, 2021, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE
AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM**