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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-16

## 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 2,686,530 in 2020. 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 (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) had an estimated total population of 5,881,250 in 2018. The 2018 *Annuario Pontificio* indicated 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 of 15,199 Catholics per parish. For the Archdiocese of New York, the figures were 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 reside in the archdiocese or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished.

Many of our parishes are unable or struggling to support themselves. Consequently, many have been receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. 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 was an increase of \$14,777,155.00 over a single year: \$3,711,999.00 more to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 more to Catholic 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, especially in times of enormous economic strain. 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 the parishes need a growing and stable membership and the financial means to support themselves.

Nearly 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 the 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 parishes located respectively in Morton Grove and Niles, Illinois, and encompassing approximately nine square miles of the five parish Edens Valley Grouping in North Suburban Cook County. These two parishes are St. Martha Parish (established 1919, also home to the Archdiocesan Shrine of All Saints), 8523 Georgiana Avenue, Morton Grove, Illinois 60053-2909; and St. Isaac Jogues Parish (established 1956), 8149 West Golf Road, Niles, Illinois 60714-1110.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Martha Parish was 1,094 (90% English-speaking and 10% Malayalam-speaking). The same year the average Sunday attendance at St. Isaac Jogues Parish 1,126 (100% English). The combined total average Sunday attendance at the two parishes was 2,220 in late 2019, this is a total decline of 22% over 20 years (from 2,834 to 2220). At St. Martha Parish, the decline over the same 20-year period was minimal (from 1,097 to 1,094). At St. Isaac Jogues Parish, the decline was 35% (from 1,741 to 1,126).

In Fiscal Year 2019, St. Martha Parish had an operating deficit of \$22,654.00, capital needs of \$619,850.00, no church debt, and savings of \$1,259,957.00. That same year St. Isaac Jogues Parish had an operating deficit of \$60,814.00, capital needs of \$1,232,900.00, no church debt, and savings of \$186,509.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019 liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Martha Parish included 37 funerals, nine marriages, and 26 Baptisms. In the same period there were 56 funerals, two marriages, and 20 Baptisms at St. Isaac Jogues Parish. The combined totals for the two parishes are 93 funerals, 11 marriages, and 46 Baptisms, average in the Archdiocese of Chicago for funerals and Baptisms and below average for marriages. The ratio of total funerals to the combined total of marriages and Baptisms, 93/57, indicates an elderly population in the parishes. The median age throughout the Grouping is 45, compared to 37 for the archdiocese.

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 Commission submitted its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Change is in order due to significant and continuing decline in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Isaac Jogues Parish, fewer priests able to serve our parishes (from 602 in 2010 to 541 in 2020), and significant capital needs at both parishes. The Church in this area will struggle financially and administratively to sustain more than one parish. For evangelization and discipleship to be the focus of future mission, the consolidation of resources under the leadership of a single pastor and pastoral team is required.

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, have before me the proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, that the above-mentioned St. Martha Parish, Morton Grove, and the adjacent St. Isaac Jogues Parish, Niles, 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. Martha Parish and St. Isaac Jogues Parish, with St. Isaac Jogues Church to be designated the parish church. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* video conference over the internet on January 19, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 34 for and two against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2021, the above-mentioned St. Martha Parish and St. Isaac Jogues 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 St. Martha Parish and St. Isaac Jogues Parish. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, SS. Martha and Isaac Jogues Parish;
2. The missions of the two extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new SS. Martha and Isaac Jogues 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 SS. Martha and Isaac Jogues Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Martha and Isaac Jogues Parish be 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 SS. Martha and Isaac Jogues Parish (see canon 121);
6. The Archdiocesan Shrine of All Saints and the church of the extinguished St. Martha Parish along with the church of the extinguished St. Isaac Jogues Parish will be places of prayer and worship for the new SS. Martha and Isaac Jogues Parish, retaining their own titles, and St. Isaac Jogues 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 January 19, 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. Isaac Jogues

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Decree

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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 pastors of St. Martha Parish and St. Isaac Jogues 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 delivered or sent 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 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March, A.D. 2021.

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 19, 2021, ARE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE  
AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS  
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM