



Prot. N. 2021 RMC-18

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 three parishes located in Sauk Village, Illinois, Glenwood, Illinois, and Lansing, Illinois, respectively, and encompassing approximately 29 square miles of Southeast Cook County, adjacent to the Illinois/Indiana border. These three parishes are St. James Parish (established 1876), 22400 South Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, Illinois 60411-5144; St. John Parish (established 1897), 301 South Cottage Grove Avenue, Glenwood, Illinois 60425-1899; and St. Ann Parish (established 1913), 3010 Ridge Road, Lansing, Illinois 60438-3020.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. James Parish was 445. The same year the average Sunday attendance at St. John Parish was 333, and at St. Ann Parish it was 655. The combined Sunday attendance at the three parishes was 1,433 in late 2019, this is a total decline of 71% over 20 years (from 5,051 to 1,443). At St. James Parish, the decline over the same 20-year period was 78% (from 2,000 to 445). At St. John Parish decline was 59% (from 821 to 333), and at St. Ann Parish it was 71% (from 2,230 to 655).

In Fiscal Year 2019, St. James Parish had an operating deficit of \$36,542.00, capital needs of \$804,725.00, total church debt of \$14,799.00, and savings of \$112,196.00. That same year, St. John Parish had an operating deficit of \$126,156.00, capital needs of \$50,500.00, no church debt, and \$150,184.00 in savings. At St. Ann Parish the figures were an operating deficit of \$267,473.00, capital needs of \$1,813,650.00, total church debt of \$4,422,543.00, and savings of \$112,587.00.

In Fiscal Year 2017, the year of the last available data, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. James Parish included 13 funerals, one marriage, and six Baptisms. In Fiscal Year 2019 there were 16 funerals, two marriages, and 14 Baptisms at St. John Parish, and 39 funerals, six marriages, and 24 Baptisms at St. Ann Parish. The combined totals for the three parishes were 68 funerals, nine marriages, and 44 Baptisms, average for typical parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The ratio of total funerals to the combined total of marriages and Baptisms, 68/53 suggests an aging population in the area.

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 its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Change is in order due to significant and continuing decline in Sunday Mass attendance at the three parishes, the consequent decrease in revenue and operating deficits at each of them, and fewer priests able to serve our parishes. The Church in this area of the archdiocese 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 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, have before me the proposal that the above-mentioned St. James Parish, Sauk Village, St. John Parish, Glenwood, and St. Ann Parish, Lansing, 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 three parishes, with St. Ann 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 March 2, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 24 for and 2 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. James Parish, St. John Parish, and St. Ann 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. James Parish, St. John Parish, and St. Ann Parish. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, SS. Ann, James, and John Parish;
2. The missions of the three extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new SS. Ann, James, and John Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the three extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new SS. Ann, James, and John Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Ann, James, and John Parish will 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 three extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new SS. Ann, James, and John Parish (canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. James Parish, St. John Parish, and St. Ann Parish will be churches of the new SS. Ann, James, and John Parish, retaining their own titles, and St. Ann 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 March 2, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

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Decree

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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. Ann 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 the above-mentioned St. James Parish, St. John Parish, and St. Ann 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 8th day of April, 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, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE
AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM