



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

Prot. N. 2021 RMC-25

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 two adjacent parishes located within approximately 12 square miles of the Northside of the City of Chicago: Our Lady of Mercy Parish (established 1911), 4432

North Troy Street, Chicago, Illinois 60625-4520; and Resurrection Parish (established 1991 by extinctive union of St. Veronica Parish and St. Francis Xavier Parish), 3043 North Francisco Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618-7012. Both these parishes serve a predominantly Spanish-speaking Catholic population. The church of Our Lady of Mercy Parish seats 1,200, while that of Resurrection Parish seats 450.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at Our Lady of Mercy Parish was 3,311 (71% Spanish, 8% Spanish-English Bilingual, and 21 English). The same year, the average Sunday attendance at Resurrection Parish was 601 (83% Spanish, and 17% English). The combined Sunday attendance at the two parishes was 3,912 in late 2019, a total decline of 20% over 20 years (from 4,882 to 3,912). At Our Lady of Mercy Parish, the decline over the period from 1999 to 2009 was 10% (from 3,688 to 3,311). At Resurrection Parish the attendance declined 50% over the same twenty-year period (from 1,194 to 601).

In Fiscal Year 2019, Our Lady of Mercy Parish had an operating surplus of \$17,595.00, no debt, savings of \$893,228.00, alongside assessed capital needs of \$593,050.00 in August 2018. In Fiscal Year 2019, Resurrection Parish had an operating surplus of \$404.00, \$73,051.00 in church debt, savings of \$7,448.00, and assessed capital needs of \$1,040,300.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Mercy Parish included 48 funerals, 16 marriages, and 141 Baptisms. In the same period there were seven funerals, seven marriages, and 35 Baptisms at Resurrection Parish. Resurrection Parish's figures are considerably below those of an average size parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

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 the recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance, a minimal operating surplus, significant church debt and little savings at Resurrection Parish, alongside 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 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 a proposal that the above-mentioned Resurrection Parish be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and united to the adjacent Our Lady of Mercy Parish, which will receive all the territory of Resurrection Parish. Moreover, Our Lady of Mercy Church will be designated the parish church of the enlarged parish. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* video conference over the internet on May 4, 2021, and June 1, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and

receiving its June 1st vote of 27 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 Resurrection Parish is extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and, with its territory, united to Our Lady of Mercy Parish;
2. The ministries of the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy Parish will, as far as possible, include also those of the extinguished Resurrection Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the extinguished Resurrection Parish, along with the faithful domiciled within the enlarged territory of Our Lady of Mercy Parish will be parishioners of the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy Parish;
4. The territory of the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy 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 extinguished Resurrection Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy Parish (canon 121);
6. The church of Our Lady of Mercy Parish and that of the extinguished Resurrection Parish will be churches of the enlarged Our Lady of Mercy Parish, retaining their own titles, and Our Lady of Mercy Church shall be designated the parish church of the enlarged parish;
7. The data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meetings of May 4, 2021, and June 1, 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 extinguished Resurrection Parish will be collected and maintained at the Our Lady of Mercy 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 Our Lady of Mercy Parish and Resurrection Parish. As soon as possible, these 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, signed, and well-argued petition, asking 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,


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1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop of Chicago, Archbishop Quigley Center, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

Given this 10th day of June, 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 MEETINGS OF MAY 4, 2021, AND JUNE 1, 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