



Office of the Archbishop
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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-11

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 barely able 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. While 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 the union of three parishes located within a territory of approximately five square miles in the West Town and Near West Side areas of the City of Chicago: Santa Maria Addolorata Parish (founded 1903 as personal parish for faithful of Italian origins), 528 North Ada Street, Chicago, Illinois 60642-6438; Holy Innocents Parish (founded 1905 as personal parish for faithful of Polish origins, reestablished as territorial parish in 1975), 743 North Armour Street, Chicago, Illinois 60642-5255; and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish (established by extinctive union 2005), 2248 West Washington Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois 60612-2235. Since 1905, clergy of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles (Scalabrinians) have staffed Santa Maria Addolorata Parish. The Scalabrinians have indicated they will soon be leaving the parish. The other two parishes are staffed by archdiocesan priests. The union of these three parishes will encompass a mixed Catholic population of African Americans, Ghanaians, and Hispanics, while preserving some elements of Polish and Italian cultures.

In Fiscal Year 2019 the average Sunday Mass attendance at Santa Maria Addolorata Parish was 400 (35% English-speaking and 65% Spanish-speaking). The same year the average Sunday attendance at Holy Innocents Parish was 726 (18% English, 75% Spanish, and 7% Polish), at St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish it was 760 (24% English, 65% Spanish, and 7% Twi (Ghanaian). Sunday Mass is no longer regularly celebrated in Italian in this area. The combined total average Sunday attendance at the three parishes was 1,886 in Fiscal Year 2019, this is a total decline of 15% over five years for the three parishes combined (from 2,186 to 1,886). At Santa Maria Addolorata Parish the decline over the same five-year period was 44% (from 708 to 400). At St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish the decline was 17% (from 911 to 760). However, at Holy Innocents Parish there was an increase of 22% (from 569 to 726).

In Fiscal Year 2019, Santa Maria Addolorata Parish had an operating deficit of \$20,405.00, capital needs of \$1,057,200.00, no church debt, and savings of \$345,943.00. In the same year Holy Innocents Parish had an operating deficit of \$24,491.00, capital needs of \$1,075,900.00, church debt of \$2,818,590.00, and savings of \$1,368,644.00. For St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish the Fiscal Year 2019 figures show an operating surplus of \$61,830.00, capital needs of \$1,297,250.00 (\$670,700.00 is school needs, borne by Big Shoulders Fund and the Archdiocese of Chicago), no church debt, and savings of \$376,135.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019 liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at Santa Maria Addolorata Parish included eight funerals, three marriages, and 26 Baptisms. In the same period there were 18 funerals, 10 marriages, and 40 Baptisms at Holy Innocents Parish, and at St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish there were 15 funerals, four marriages, and 11 Baptisms. The combined totals for the three parishes are 41 funerals, 17 marriages, and 77 Baptisms, below average for a Chicago parish, but a good ratio of total funerals to the combined total of marriages and Baptisms, 41/94.

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. Due to the relatively small size of each of the parishes, fewer priests to serve as pastors, large debt at Holy Innocents Parish, and significant capital needs at each of the three parishes, changes are in order. The area will struggle to sustain more than one parish to serve the local communities. For evangelization and mission to be the focus of future ministry, the Church in this area of the Archdiocese of Chicago, must consolidate resources under the leadership of a single pastor and pastoral team.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me the recommended proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, that the adjacent and above mentioned Santa Maria Addolorata Parish, Holy Innocents Parish, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish, all in the West Town and Near West Side areas of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within combined territories of Holy Innocents Parish and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish, save for the territory west of Damen Avenue and north of the railroad tracks at Kinzie Street, with St. Malachy 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 15, 18-19, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 31 for and two against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2021, the above-mentioned Santa Maria Addolorata Parish, Holy Innocents Parish, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood 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 territory of Holy Innocents Parish and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish, less the territory west of Damen Avenue and north of the railroad tracks at Kinzie Street, and called, *ad interim*, Santa Maria Addolorata, Holy Innocents, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish;
2. The missions of the three extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new Santa Maria Addolorata, Holy Innocents, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood 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 Santa Maria Addolorata, Holy Innocents, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish;
4. The territory of the new Santa Maria Addolorata, Holy Innocents, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood 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 Santa Maria Addolorata, Holy Innocents, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish (see canon 121);

6. The churches of the extinguished Santa Maria Addolorata Parish, the extinguished Holy Innocents Parish, and the extinguished St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish will be churches of the new Santa Maria Addolorata, Holy Innocents, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood Parish, and St. Malachy 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 15, 18-19, 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 three extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the St. Malachy 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 Santa Maria Addolorata Parish, Holy Innocents Parish, and St. Malachy + Precious Blood 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 to revoke or amend the decree must be 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 11th 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 15, 18-19, 2021, ARE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE
AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM