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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-4

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. 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 within a territory of less than four square miles in the Rogers Park and Edgewater neighborhoods on the Northside of the City of Chicago. The first of these parishes is St. Jerome Parish (founded in 1895), 1709 West Lunt Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626-3212. The second is St. Ignatius Parish (founded in 1906 by Jesuits from the then St. Ignatius College, on a site that would become the anchor for today's Loyola University Chicago), 6559 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626-5121. The Jesuits staffed the parish until 2000. From 2000 to 2018 an archdiocesan priest served as pastor, and since 2018 the parish has been entrusted to a deacon (canon 517 §2). The third parish is St. Gertrude Parish (founded in 1912), 1420 West Granville Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60660-1810.

Today the three parishes serve one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the City of Chicago. However, ministry in the area focuses on English-speaking and Spanish-speaking populations. St. Gertrude Parish serves a Sunday assembly of approximately 733 English-speaking parishioners. The Sunday assembly at St. Ignatius Parish numbers 930, 24% English and 76% Spanish. At St. Jerome Parish the Sunday assembly numbers 1,565, 15% English, 74% Spanish, and 11% bilingual. There have been large declines in Sunday attendance over the last five years in two of the parishes, 22% at St. Ignatius Parish and 61% at St. Jerome Parish. During the same period the decline was 11% at St. Gertrude Parish, 34% over 20 years.

In Fiscal year 2019, St. Gertrude Parish had an operating deficit of \$132,585.00, along with capital needs of \$1,143,050.00 and savings of \$331,895.00. The same fiscal year St. Ignatius Parish had an operating deficit of \$192,652.00, accumulated debt of \$193,972.00, capital needs of \$2,318,350.00, and savings of \$12,885.00. Meanwhile, St. Jerome Parish had a 2019 surplus of \$43,897.00, no debt, \$3,083,900.00 capital needs, and savings of \$90,752.00.

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 decline in active participation at Sunday Mass, operating deficits, declining incomes, unmet capital needs, and fewer priests to serve as pastors, it was thought that the area can reasonably sustain only two parishes. Consequently, the recommendations proposed that the middle parish, St. Ignatius Parish, be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and that its territory be divided along Albion Avenue between St. Jerome Parish on the north and St. Gertrude Parish on the south.

The proposal is supported by demographic changes in the area, and by data mentioned in or attached to this decree. Instead of three parishes, two will serve a population of English- and Spanish-speaking Catholics. This will be within an area of less than four square miles,

small by comparison to other areas of the City of Chicago. The campus of the extinguished St. Ignatius Parish will be within the boundaries of and administered by St. Gertrude Parish. St. Gertrude Parish will also be a host campus of the Northside Catholic Academy.

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 proposal that St. Ignatius Parish on the Northside of the City of Chicago be extinguished as a separate juridic person in the Church and its territory divided along Albion Avenue between St. Jerome Parish on the north and St. Gertrude Parish on the south. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via video* conference over the internet on December 18, 2020. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 33 for and 1 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 St. Ignatius Parish will be extinguished as separate juridic person in the Church and its territory divided along Albion Avenue between St. Jerome Parish on the north and St. Gertrude Parish on the south;
2. The mission of the extinguished parish will be subsumed into those of St. Jerome Parish and St. Gertrude Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the extinguished St. Ignatius Parish will become parishioners of either St. Jerome Parish or St. Gertrude Parish according to domicile, although each retains the right to associate with either parish;
4. The territory of the enlarged St. Jerome Parish and the territory of the enlarged St. Gertrude Parish will be as described and depicted in the documents and map attached to this decree;
5. The real property of the extinguished St. Ignatius Parish, including St. Ignatius Church, will be located within the territory of the enlarged St. Gertrude Parish, and administered by that parish;
6. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, proceeds from the alienation of the goods and patrimonial rights of the extinguished St. Ignatius Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will, upon alienation, be divided between St. Jerome Parish and St. Gertrude Parish, with two thirds going to St. Jerome Parish and one third going to St. Gertrude Parish; (see canon 121);
7. The church of the extinguished St. Ignatius Parish will be a second church of St. Gertrude Parish, retaining its own title. Accordingly, St. Gertrude Church will remain the parish church of the enlarged parish;

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8. The data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of December 18, 2020, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

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

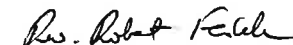
10. Notification of this decree shall be given immediately through the official website of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The decree shall be conveyed to the pastoral leadership of St. Ignatius Parish and to the pastors of St. Jerome Parish and St. Gertrude Parish. As soon as possible, the pastoral leadership or pastors shall inform their parishioners through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, and signed petition 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).

Given this 4th day of February, 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 DECEMBER 18, 2020, ARE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM