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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-6

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 two parishes located within the Village of Summit in West suburban Cook County, Illinois. The village, also known as Summit-Argo, has an area of approximately two and one-quarter square miles, and is home to a total population of 11,260. St. Joseph Parish, originally a mission of St. Mary Parish in Lyons, was established in 1909 and is located at 7240 West 57th Street, Summit, Illinois 60501-1324. Within St. Joseph Parish, a personal parish for Polish-speaking faithful was formed in 1924. The personal foundation was called St. Blase Parish and it is located at 6101 South 75th Avenue, Summit, Illinois 60501-1628.

Today the two parishes serve a suburban village having a significant and growing Spanish-speaking Catholic population. This population has been settling in an area that had been composed of mostly Polish-speaking faithful, joining also with both English-speaking and bilingual residents. Recently, both parishes have a trilingual ministry. In 2019 the average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Joseph Parish was 1,247 (33% English-speaking, 26% Polish-speaking, and 41% Spanish-speaking). In the same year, the average Sunday assembly at St. Blase Parish totaled 1,851 (17% English, 46% Polish, and 37% Spanish). There were significant declines in Sunday attendance over the last 10 years in both parishes: 24% at St. Joseph Parish (from 1,634 to 1,247) and 36% at St. Blase Parish (from 2,876 to 1,851).

In Fiscal year 2019, St. Joseph Parish had an operating surplus of \$51,447.00, unmet capital needs of \$1,415,300.00, a total debt of \$1,505,649.00, and savings of \$319,352.00. In the same fiscal year, St. Blase Parish had an operating deficit of \$133,736.00, unmet capital needs of \$393,000.00, no total debt, and savings of \$20,641.00. Without significant and uncertain rental income, neither parish has sufficient assets or income to meet present or future needs. In Fiscal Year 2020, St. Joseph Parish received from the Archdiocese of Chicago \$83,035.00 in operating aid to pay parish bills.

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 small size of the village territory, fewer priests to serve a pastors, significant and ongoing decline in active participation at Sunday Mass, operating deficits, declining incomes, and unmet capital needs, the area can no longer sustain two parishes serving the same trilingual demographics. Consequently, the recommendations proposed that St. Joseph Parish and St. Blase Parish be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territory of the St. Joseph Parish, with St. Blase Church as the parish church.

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. Joseph Parish and St. Blase Parish, both in Summit, Illinois, be extinguished as a separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territory of St. Joseph Parish, with St. Blase Church 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 34 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. Joseph Parish and St. Blase Parish will be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territory of St. Joseph Parish, and called, *ad interim*, SS. Joseph and Blase Parish;
2. The missions of the two extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new SS. Joseph and Blase Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the extinguished St. Joseph Parish and the extinguished St. Blase Parish, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new SS. Joseph and Blase Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Joseph and Blase Parish will be as described and depicted in the documents and map 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 St. Joseph Parish and the extinguished St. Blase Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new SS. Joseph and Blase Parish (see canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. Joseph Parish and the extinguished St. Blase Parish will be churches of the new SS. Joseph and Blase Parish, and St. Blase Church will 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 December 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 extinguished St. Joseph Parish and the extinguished St. Blase Parish will be collected and maintained at the St. Blase 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. Joseph Parish and

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St. Blase Parish. As soon as possible, the 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 11th 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 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