



Prot. N. 2021 RMC-7

## 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 three parishes located within a territory of approximately four and one-half square miles in the Chatham and Park Manor neighborhoods on the Southside of the City of Chicago. Originally founded as non-ethnic territorial parishes, today these parishes are located within an area of the City mostly populated by African American residents. The parishes are: St. Columbanus Parish (established 1909), 331 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street, Chicago, Illinois 60619-1122; St. Dorothy Parish (established 1916), 450 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, Illinois 60619-2994; and St. Clotilde Parish (established 1928), 8430 South Calumet Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60619-6032.

In 2019 the average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Columbanus was 217. The same year the average Sunday attendance at St. Dorothy Parish was 241, and at St. Clotilde Parish it was 83. The combined total average Sunday attendance at the three parishes has been less than 700 for most of the last six years. This is within a total decline of 51% over 20 years for the three parishes combined (from 1,111 to 541).

In Fiscal Year 2019, St. Columbanus Parish had an operating deficit of \$544,108.00, unmet capital needs of \$1,536,900.00, a debt of \$3,937,433.00, and savings of \$13,276.00. In the same fiscal year, St. Dorothy Parish had an operating deficit of \$85,382.00, unmet capital needs of \$1,782,700.00, debt of \$274,713.00, and savings of \$254,271.00. For St. Clotilde Parish the Fiscal Year 2019 figures are an operating surplus of \$24,114.00, unmet capital needs of \$805,000.00, debt of \$933,968.00, and savings of \$79,995.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019 and part of Fiscal Year 2020, the celebration of liturgical and sacramental life apart from Sunday Mass at St. Columbanus Parish indicates there were 11 funerals, one marriage, and 10 Baptisms. In the same period there were 32 funerals, no marriages, and four Baptisms at St. Dorothy Parish, and four funerals, one marriage, and one Baptism at St. Clotilde Parish.

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 territory of each parish, fewer priests to serve as pastors, significant and ongoing decline in the number of those participating at Sunday Mass, operating deficits in recent years, declining incomes, and unmet capital needs, changes must be made. The area is unable to sustain three parishes serving a small and decreasing community of Catholic faithful. For mission to focus the future ministry of the Church in this area of the City of Chicago, we must consolidate resources under a single pastoral team leading a community of significant and growing size.

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 St. Columbanus Parish, St. Dorothy Parish, and St. Clotilde Parish, all on the Southside of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as a separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within combined territories of the three parishes, with St. Columbanus 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 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. Columbanus Parish, and St. Dorothy Parish, and St. Clotilde Parish will 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 the three parishes, and called, *ad interim*, SS. Dorothy, Columbanus, and Clotilde Parish;
2. The missions of the three extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new SS. Dorothy, Columbanus, and Clotilde Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the extinguished St. Columbanus Parish, the extinguished St. Dorothy Parish, and the extinguished St. Clotilde Parish, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new SS. Dorothy, Columbanus, and Clotilde Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Dorothy, Columbanus, and Clotilde Parish will be as described and depicted in the document 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. Columbanus Parish, the extinguished St. Dorothy Parish, and the extinguished St. Clotilde Parish, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new SS. Dorothy, Columbanus, and Clotilde Parish (see canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. Columbanus Parish, the extinguished St. Dorothy Parish, and the extinguished St. Clotilde Parish, will be churches of the new SS. Dorothy, Columbanus, and Clotilde Parish and St. Columbanus 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. Columbanus Parish, the extinguished St. Dorothy Parish, and the extinguished St. Clotilde Parish will be collected and maintained at the St. Columbanus 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. Columbanus Parish, St. Dorothy Parish, and St. Clotilde 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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