



Bronzeville/Hyde Park/Washington Park Renew My Church Update: January 21, 2021

Discernment Process

St. Ambrose, St. Anselm, St. Elizabeth, Holy Angels, Corpus Christi and St. Thomas the Apostle Parishes, engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) discernment process through the fall of 2020. The Grouping Feedback and Discernment team (GFDT), which was made up of members from each community, met to review and discern the future parish structure for the area. Our deepest appreciation goes to the GFDT who prayerfully discerned the parish grouping structure during this challenging time.

Based on their meetings and feedback gathered from the larger parish communities, they submitted feedback to the archdiocese. The Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, which includes representatives from across the Archdiocese of Chicago, reviewed the feedback and other information, including parish trends, finances, and capital needs.

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Perry are grateful to Fr. Owusu-Achiaw, Fr. Kelly, Fr. Nnadozie, Fr. Smith, Fr. Costello and the Grouping Teams who gathered throughout the past few months, and all parishioners who offered feedback through the recent discernment process.

Outcome

In the past few weeks, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, the archdiocese's auxiliary bishops, and the archdiocese's Presbyteral Council met to discuss the Commission's recommendation. Based upon those discussions and prayerful consideration, and with gratitude for the clarity of the GFDT's discernment, Cardinal Cupich accepted the direction proposed by the GFDT and made the following decisions regarding the parish structure in Bronzeville, Hyde Park and Washington Park.

- **In alignment with the feedback submitted by the GFDT, St Ambrose, St Anselm, Corpus Christi, St Elizabeth and Holy Angels will unite to form a new parish with one pastor and one pastoral team, effective July 1, 2021.**
- **Holy Angels will be the main worship site where all sacramental records are kept.**
 - The specific timeline to transition Masses will be determined by parish leadership in the coming months.
 - **Fr. Robert Kelly, a Divine Word Missionary priest, will be pastor of the new parish.**
 - The Divine Word Missionary Priests and Brothers or "SVD's" as they are known, under the leadership of Fr. Robert Kelly, will continue their 125-year-old relationship with the Archdiocese in caring for the faithful, including a commitment to the newly unified parish and a respect for the legacy parishes of the Bronzeville and Washington Park community.
- **In the upcoming months, further discernment will be done to envision how St. Elizabeth could be used for a Venerable Augustus Tolton Heritage Center.**
- **St. Thomas the Apostle will remain in its current structure.**
- **There are no changes to Holy Angels School or St. Thomas the Apostle School.**

Parish Structure Rationale

- St. Ambrose, St. Anselm, Corpus Christi, St. Elizabeth and Holy Angels are historic and ground-breaking parishes in Chicagoland and an important part of the Black Catholic Initiative. However, it is no longer possible for the community to support that many parishes in such a tight geographical area.
- The parish traditions that have grounded those parishes will be brought forward into the newly unified parish and also provide an opportunity for new traditions to be honored.



Next Steps

Parish leadership and parishioners will discern possibilities for the name of the new parish, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit their considerations to Cardinal Cupich for his decision on the permanent name of the new parish.

The united parish community will embark upon the next phase of renewal focusing on strong evangelization to the world around us. The renewal process calls us to become a stronger, more sustainable presence for the future, capable of reaching more people in their work of making disciples of Jesus Christ, building communities with one another and inspiring witness in the world around us.