



West Little Village Renew My Church Update: March 11, 2021

Discernment Process

St. Agnes of Bohemia, Epiphany and Good Shepherd Parishes engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) review and discernment process through the past few months. 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 of the global pandemic.

Based on their meetings and feedback gathered from the larger parish community, 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 financial summaries and parish trends.

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Lombardo are grateful to Fr. Long, Fr. Nevins, Fr. Garcia-Maldonado and the Grouping Team 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, Cardinal Cupich made the following decisions regarding the parish structure in West Little Village.

- **Effective July 1, 2021, Epiphany and Good Shepherd will unite as a new parish, continuing to use both churches for Mass.**
 - As one parish, the two communities will have one pastor and one pastoral team.
 - Epiphany will be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records will be kept.
 - The united parish will be known as Good Shepherd and Epiphany Parish while the parish engages in a process to propose a permanent name for the new parish. The local community will discern possibilities for the new permanent name, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit three to five options to Cardinal Cupich.
 - The united parish's Mass schedule at each location after July 1 will be a priority topic for the pastor and parish leadership in the coming months.
 - There are no changes to Epiphany School.
 - Fr. Orlando Flores Orea, currently pastor of St. Paul in Chicago Heights, will be the pastor of the newly-unified parish.
 - Fr. Dan Long, Fr. Jose Maria Garcia Maldonado and Fr. Marco Antonio Franco Luna will each receive new assignments at other parishes effective July 1, 2021.

- **St. Agnes of Bohemia** will remain in its current structure. Officially it will transition from being formed as a Czech national parish under church law to a territorial parish responsible for the territory between the Metra tracks and the canal from Kedzie to Pulaski.
 - There are no changes to St. Agnes of Bohemia School.
 - Fr. Don Nevins will continue to serve as pastor.



Parish Structure Rationale

- Uniting Epiphany and Good Shepherd provides the financial and operational support necessary to enhance and expand ministry at the newly-united parish.
- The close geography of the two worship sites will lead to more focused ministry in their area.
- St. Agnes of Bohemia meets attendance and financial benchmarks necessary to sustain a single, stand-alone parish.
- Understanding financial concerns that could remain, the two resulting parishes are encouraged to continue working together, not only on the ministerial renewal of Building the New Reality, but to explore sharing operational resources where mutually beneficial.

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 parish communities 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.