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Prot. N. 2022 RMC-1

## 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 2,693,976 in 2020. During the last decade, the total population of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) declined by less than 2%, from 5,903,190 in 2010 to an estimated 5,821,933 in 2020. Over the same ten-year period the Catholic population of the Archdiocese of Chicago declined by nearly 7% (159,000), from 2,338,000 to 2,179,000.

A good number of our parishes were founded in the first half of the 20th 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. Today, many of our parishes are unable or struggling to support themselves. Consequently, 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 includes \$14,777,155.00 during Fiscal Year 2020 alone: \$3,711,999.00 to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 to Catholic schools, mostly parochial 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. 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 mission, the parishes need a growing and stable membership and the financial means to support themselves.

More than 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 my 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 adjacent parishes located within approximately four-square miles in the West Suburban municipalities of Berwyn and Cicero, Illinois: St. Mary of Celle

Parish (established 1909), 1428 Wesley Avenue, Berwyn, Illinois 60402-1287; and St. Frances of Rome Parish (established 1923), 1428 South 59<sup>th</sup> Court, Cicero, Illinois 60804-1056.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Mary of Celle Parish was 662 (51% Spanish, 42% English, and 7% Tagalog). The same year, the average Sunday attendance at St. Frances of Rome Parish was 1248 (80% Spanish and 20% English). The combined Sunday attendance at the two parishes was 1,910 in late 2019, a total decline of 11% over five years (from 2,146 to 1,910). At St. Mary of Celle Parish, the decline over the twenty-year period from 1999 to 2019 was 34% (998 to 662). At St. Frances of Rome Parish, the attendance grew more than 50% over the same period (from 813 to 1,248).

In Fiscal Year 2020, St. Mary of Celle Parish had an operating deficit of \$129,732.00 (more than twice the operating deficit for Fiscal Year 2019), no debt, savings of \$181,271.00, and capital needs of \$2,865,500.00. For Fiscal Year 2020, St. Frances of Rome Parish had an operating surplus of \$44,515.00 (\$113,617.00 less than the Fiscal Year 2019 surplus), no debt, savings of \$1,555,860.00, and capital needs of \$1,953,490.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Mary of Celle Parish included 10 funerals, four marriages, and 41 Baptisms. In the same period there were 15 funerals, seven marriages, and 39 Baptisms at St. Frances of Rome Parish. The 2019 combined totals for the two parishes were 25 funerals, 11 marriages, and 80 Baptisms, indicative of an average tally for a single parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago and a younger than average population.

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 *Renew My Church* Executive Committee submitted its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Mary of Celle Parish, significant capital needs at both parishes, and fewer priests, change is needed. The Church in this area would struggle financially and administratively to sustain more than one parish. If the care of souls, evangelization, and discipleship are to be the focus of future mission, the consolidation and conservation of resources under the leadership of a single pastor and pastoral team is needed.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 121, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me a proposal that the above-mentioned St. Mary of Celle Parish, Berwyn, and St. Frances of Rome Parish, Cicero, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish named St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish, within the combined territories of St. Mary of Celle Parish and St. France of Rome Parish. St. Frances of Rome Church to be designated the parish church. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago at St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois, on September 7, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral

Council and receiving its vote of 29 for and none against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

***I decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2022, the above-mentioned St. Mary of Celle Parish and St. Frances of Rome Parish shall be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the combined territories of St. Mary of Celle Parish and St. Frances of Rome Parish. The new parish is to be called St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish;
2. The ministries of the two extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish;
4. The territory of the new St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish will be as depicted and described on the map and in the document 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 two extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish (canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. Mary of Celle Parish and the extinguished St. Frances of Rome will be churches of the new St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Christ Parish, retaining their own titles, and St. Frances of Rome Church shall 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 September 7, 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 two extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the St. Frances of Rome 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. Mary of Celle Parish and St. Frances of Rome Parish. As soon as possible, the pastors shall inform their parishioners of the decree through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.


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*Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, and signed petition, asking me to revoke or amend the decree, must be sent or delivered to me within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737). The address is Office of the Archbishop of Chicago, Archbishop Quigley Center, 835 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.*

Given this 11<sup>th</sup> day of January, A.D. 2022.  
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 SEPTEMBER 7, 2021, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM