



Des Plaines Renew My Church Update: January 2022

Discernment Process

St. Mary, St. Stephen Protomartyr and St. Zachary Parishes and the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) review and discernment process over 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 structure during this challenging time of the 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 Grob are grateful to Fr. Collins, Fr. Arcila, Fr. Rapcia, Fr. Sanchez and the Grouping Team who gathered together, and all 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 parishes in this grouping.

- **St. Mary and St. Stephen Protomartyr will unite as one parish with two worship sites, one pastor and one pastoral team, effective July 1, 2022.**
 - Both churches will continue to host a regular schedule of Masses. The specific schedule will be determined by the pastor in consultation with parish leadership.
 - St. Stephen Protomartyr will formally be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records will be kept.
 - The local community will discern possibilities for the new permanent name of the united parish, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit three to five options to Cardinal Cupich. Each church retains its name while the united parish receives a new name.
 - Fr. David Arcila will serve as pastor of the newly unified parish.
 - The united parish will work closely with the RMC Organizational Transitions ("OT") team and Real Estate/Facilities to develop a specific plan for the school building at St. Mary.
- **St. Zachary Parish and School will continue in its current structure.**
- **The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe will continue in its current structure.**

Rationale

- Uniting St. Mary and St. Stephen Protomartyr as one parish with two worship sites will enable developing a cohesive pastoral and evangelization plan, help address realities of the declining number of pastors available to staff parishes and provide a structure to most effectively build a full parish staff to support ministry in the area.
- St. Zachary will continue its parish ministry to the western portion of Des Plaines, as well as Polish ministry for the wider area and a Catholic school presence in Des Plaines. The parish and school will continue their efforts to further grow enrollment and ensure future financial sustainability without Archdiocesan financial support.
- The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe will continue its mission as a place of encounter for pilgrims from all over while collaborating with the Des Plaines parishes in support of ministry to the area.

Next steps

- All the parish communities will continue to the next phase of renewal, focusing on strong evangelization to the world around us. Specifically, with the support of the Parish Vitality Coordinator, Eleanor Segraves, and the Evangelization team of the Archdiocese, your parishes will continue to build the new reality, focused on deepening discipleship, and supporting disciples in becoming missionary disciples for the work of evangelization.
- We know that this structural change is just the beginning of our journey of renewal. The renewal process calls us to become a stronger, more sustainable presence for the future, capable of reaching more people by sharing our discipleship in Jesus Christ, building communities with one another and inspiring witness in the world around us.
- Profound gratitude to all involved in the process to date, and prayers for all those who will take up the next phase of renewal, sharing faith and evangelizing those searching to know Jesus more deeply.