



Alsip-Crestwood-Palos Renew My Church Update: January 2022

Discernment Process

Incarnation, St. Alexander and St. Terrence Parishes 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 Wypych are grateful to Fr. Falana, Fr. Michniewicz, Fr. Abraham 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 parish structure in this grouping.

- **Incarnation and St. Terrence will unite as a new 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.
 - Incarnation will formally be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records will be kept.
 - The interim name of the united parish will be Incarnation and St. Terrence Parish. 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. Continuing with the combined name is an option. Each church building retains its name.
 - Fr. Arek Falana will be pastor of the united parish.
- **St. Alexander Parish and School will continue in its current structure.**

Rationale

- The Grouping Team recognized the need for Incarnation and St. Terrence to unite as one parish to have a parish structure in the grouping in which all parishes surpass the benchmarks for sustainability and vitality set forth through the Renew My Church process.
- Uniting Incarnation and St. Terrence will better support developing a cohesive pastoral and evangelization plan for their areas of Palos Heights, Crestwood and Alsip, 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.
- Using both Incarnation and St. Terrence churches as worship sites allows for continued physical presence in both communities, along with providing parish leadership the opportunity to decide how best to use each campus's ministry spaces in support of evangelization, formation, and social outreach.
- St. Alexander, as well as a united Incarnation and St. Terrence, recognize the need to engage in the work of evangelization in the next phases of the RMC process.
- The grouping can work to promote excellence in Catholic school education with a preference for St. Alexander School.

Next steps

- 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.
- We know that this structural change is just the beginning of our journey of renewal. All the parishes in this grouping, including the newly united parish community, will embark upon the next phase of renewal, focusing on strong evangelization to the world around us. Renewal of our Church means that every Catholic, every searcher, and everyone who loves Jesus and his Church, will have to look anew at what it means to be Jesus' disciple and to live out that discipleship.
- 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.