



Office of the Archbishop
835 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312.534.8230
archchicago.org

Prot. N. 2022 RMC-13

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. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated additional 100,000 individuals have left the Chicago area. During the last decade, the total population of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) declined by less than 2% (81,257) from 5,903,190 in 2010 to an estimated 5,821,933 in 2020. However, 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 more than 100 years ago, in the 19th Century or the first half of the 20th Century. 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 are unable or struggling to support themselves. Consequently, from Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2021, the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$187,818,176.00 in support to parishes and Catholic schools: \$49,452,924.00 to 119 parishes and \$138,365,252.00 to 99 Catholic schools. This includes \$10,708,494.00 during Fiscal Year 2021 alone: \$3,120,340.00 to parishes and \$7,588,154.00 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 three neighboring parishes located within approximately 13 square miles of the south suburban Cook County municipalities of Homewood, Hazel Crest, East Hazel

Crest, and Country Club Hills: St. Joseph Parish (established 1914), 17951 Dixie Highway, Homewood, Illinois 60430-1703; St. Anne Parish (established 1949), 16802 South Lincoln Street, Hazel Crest, Illinois 60429-1414; and St. Emeric Parish (established 1960), 4330 West 180th Street, Country Club Hills, Illinois 60478-5102. The churches of these three parishes are between 1.6 and 4.7 miles apart, a drive of between four and 10 minutes.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Joseph Parish was 640, a 59% decline from the 1,570 attending in Fiscal Year 2000. The same year, the average Sunday attendance at St. Anne Parish was 194, a 63% decline from the 521 attending in Fiscal Year 2000. At St. Emeric Parish, the Fiscal Year 2020 average Sunday attendance was 215, a 55% decline from 474 in Fiscal Year 2000.

In Fiscal Years 2019 to 2021, St. Joseph Parish had operating deficits of \$37,097.00, \$40,710.00, and \$48,199.00 respectively. St. Anne Parish had operating surpluses of \$13,975.00, \$18,050.00, and \$387,090.00 in the same three years. St. Emeric Parish had deficits of \$40,089.00 in Fiscal Year 2019 and \$69,571.00 in Fiscal Year 2020, and an operating surplus of \$57,505.00 in Fiscal Year 2021.

On October 31, 2021, St. Joseph Parish had savings of \$429,058.00 on deposit, and \$148,126.00 in church debt. On the same date St. Anne Parish had savings of \$6,218.00 on deposit, and \$1,619,067.00 in church debt, while St. Emeric had savings of \$270,748.00 on deposit and no church debt.

In August 2021, the assessed capital needs of St. Joseph Parish were \$746,950.00, for St. Anne Parish they were \$608,285.00, and for St. Emeric Parish they were \$1,196,500.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Parish included 42 funerals, five marriages, and 11 Baptisms. In the same period, St. Anne Parish had 16 funeral, 1 marriage, and 15 Baptisms, while at St. Emeric Parish there were 12 funerals, seven marriages, and four Baptisms. The Fiscal Year 2019 combined totals for the three parishes are 70 funerals, 13 marriages, and 30 Baptisms, figures indicative of aging populations.

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 the Commission's recommendation to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to the significant 20-year decline in the number of faithful at all three parishes, the continuing decline in the number of priests able to serve as pastors, recent annual operating deficits at St. Joseph Parish and St. Emeric Parish, and significant church debt at St. Anne Parish, the Church in this area of the Archdiocese of Chicago will struggle financially and administratively to sustain two or three parishes. If the care of souls, evangelization, and discipleship are to be the focus of future mission, the consolidation and conservation of resources within one new parish is the recommended course of action.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 121, canon 127 §§1, 2, 2°, & 3, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me a proposal that the above-mentioned St. Joseph Parish, Homewood, St. Anne Parish, Hazel Crest, and St. Emeric Parish, Country Club Hills, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish named, *ad interim*, SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish, located within the combined territories of the three parishes. St. Joseph Church is to be designated the parish church. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago electronically *via* the internet on January 17, 2022. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 31 for and two 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. Joseph Parish, St. Anne Parish, and St. Emeric 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 the three parishes. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish;

2. The ministries of the three extinguished parishes will become those of the new SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the three extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish;

4. The territory of the new SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish will be the combined territories of the extinguished St. Joseph Parish, the extinguished St. Anne Parish, and the extinguished St. Emeric Parish, 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 three extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish (canon 121);

6. The churches of the extinguished St. Joseph Parish, the extinguished St. Anne Parish, and the extinguished St. Emeric Parish will be churches of the new SS. Joseph, Anne, and Emeric Parish, retaining their own titles. St. Joseph 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 January 17, 2022, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

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8. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the three extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the St. Joseph 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. Joseph Parish, St. Anne Parish, and St. Emeric Parish. As soon as possible, the pastors shall inform their parishioners of the decree through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

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 25th day of April, 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 JANUARY 17, 2022, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM