



## **Prospect (St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Thomas Becket) Renew My Church Update: January 2023**

### **Discernment Process**

St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Thomas Becket 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.

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. Le, Fr. Kulig 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. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Thomas Becket will unite as one parish with two worship sites, one pastor and one pastoral team, effective July 1, 2023.**
  - 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. Thomas Becket will formally be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records will be kept.
  - Noting the newly unified parish will have a strong Polish community, the priest placement board will take this into consideration when recommending a pastor candidate to Cardinal Cupich.
  - 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.
- **St. Alphonsus Liguori School will continue in its current structure, however, future viability will be revisited if the school is unable to maintain financial independence. As in recent years, the school must meet its financial obligations.**

### **Rationale**

- The demographics of each parish's formal territory indicated unification would be beneficial to address realities of an aging local community and the continued increase of Polish families in the local area.
- Uniting St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Thomas Becket as one parish with two worship sites will provide additional options for the best use of their space for combined ministries. St. Alphonsus Liguori's campus offers better space for larger gatherings, and St. Thomas Becket's campus is well suited for gatherings held in smaller spaces.
- While local leadership is hesitant about unification on July 1, 2023, versus slowly moving toward a unification in the future, the RMC Commission recommended moving forward based on its evaluation that uniting will be needed in the future and experience has shown it is better to move forward sooner rather than delaying unification.

### **Next steps**

- The united parish community 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.