



Prot. N. 2019 RMC-21

## DECREE

### IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

“Every effort is to be made that parishes, in which apostolic activity can be performed only with difficulty or less effectively because of the excessive number of the faithful or too vast a territory or for any other reason, be suitably divided or dismembered according to the various circumstances. Likewise, parishes which are too small should be united insofar as the situation demands it and circumstances permit.” St. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio, Ecclesiae Sanctae*, n. 21, (1), August 6, 1966

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 has decreased by nearly 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,736,000 today. The archdiocese has many vacant old and underused parochial buildings and fewer priests to pastor our faith communities.

According to the US Census Bureau, the Archdiocese of Chicago had an estimated total population of 5,914,783 in 2018. The 2018 *Annuario Pontificio* indicates Chicago had 345 parishes serving a Catholic population of 2,512,000. In 2018 the Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a total population of 11,519,517, with 287 parishes for a Catholic population of 4,362,000, more than twice the number of Catholics per parish than Chicago. In the same year the Archdiocese of New York had 2,656,987 Catholics in 294 parishes, also a much larger parishioners per parish number than in Chicago. A good number of our parishes were founded in the first half of the last century or earlier. Many were established for national, linguistic, or ethnic groups that no longer live in the archdiocese or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished.

Too many of our parishes have been unable to support themselves and are receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2018 these subsidies amounted to \$144,373,461.00, including \$38,171,840.00 to 106 parishes, and \$106,201,621.00 to 83 Catholic schools. More than \$25,000,000.00 was given in the last two fiscal years alone. None of this money will be recovered by the archdiocese. The Archdiocese of Chicago cannot continue this level of financial support for parishes and Catholic schools. Our hope is that our parishes will become more vital, that is, active centers of Christian discipleship, evangelical mission, scholarship, and charitable outreach. To achieve this hope, the parishes must be able to support themselves when possible.

Inspired by the experience of St. Francis of Assisi before the cross of San Damiano, and by Pope Francis's dream of "a missionary option ... capable of transforming everything" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27, November 24, 2013), I consulted widely and announced in early 2016 the inauguration of *Renew My Church (RMC)*, a multi-year process aimed at obtaining and preserving the vitality of our parishes. It is my intention that every parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago join with some of its neighbors and plan for their future. Careful planning will create a menu of possible options for greater vitality. It will also identify parishes likely to be reorganized through pastoral coordination, unions, and other significant alterations.

In early 2017 five parishes, all located within approximately 24 four square miles of the suburban North Shore area of Cook County, were designated to form the second of two pilot groupings to initiate *RMC*. The parish priests and delegates from SS. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish, 191 Linden Street, Winnetka, Illinois 60093-3832; Sacred Heart Parish, 1077 Tower Road, Winnetka, Illinois 60093-1852; St. Philip the Apostle Parish, 1962 Old Willow Road, Northfield, Illinois 60093-2913; St. Francis Xavier Parish, 524 Ninth Street, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2714; and St. Joseph Parish, 1747 Lake Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091, met regularly as the North Shore Grouping Feedback and Discernment Team. On September 7, 2017, they submitted a Community Engagement and Planning Feedback Summary to the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, a group formed by lay and ordained representatives from across the archdiocese

Narrowing their work from 13 to five possible scenarios, the Grouping Team was unable to form a consensus. Nonetheless, Scenario B was selected for recommendation by the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission. Under this scenario SS. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish would remain a separate juridic person; Sacred Heart Parish would unite with St. Philip the Apostle Parish to form a single new parish; and St. Francis Xavier Parish and St. Joseph Parish would also unite to form a single new parish. This decree applies to St. Francis Xavier Parish and St. Joseph Parish.

- St. Francis Xavier Parish was established in 1904 at the request of 34 English-speaking Catholic families in the then mostly undeveloped North Shore suburb of Wilmette. The church was dedicated in 1905 and later a new church was built and dedicated in 1939. 948 families belonged to the parish in 1978. Today Sunday Mass attendance is 801, a 30% decrease from 1,044 two years ago. Operating revenue for 2018 was \$2,018,216.00.
- St. Joseph Parish was formed in 1845 to serve German-speaking Catholics in the then Village of Gross Point, annexed to Wilmette in 1924. Today the parish has no German-speaking mission and a Sunday Mass attendance of 678 persons, a 10% decrease from 748 in 2016. Parish operating revenue for 2018 was \$1,134,557.00.

Each of these two parishes has had its own clergy and lay staff, its own programing, and its own administration. Combining these elements will provide significant savings and other efficiencies as the parishes are joined together under a single pastor and a dynamic staff, all working together for the common good.

Having considered the work and representations of the Grouping Team and that of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, I decided to advance the aforementioned Scenario B for consideration in the Presbyteral Council.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canons 50 & 51, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago on May 28, 2019, at St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, Illinois. There, according to the said Scenario B, the proposal of the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission to alter the status of St. Francis Xavier Parish and St. Joseph Parish, both in Wilmette, Illinois, was presented to the Council and accepted. Having heard the Presbyteral Council at the same meeting, I now, after invoking the Holy Spirit,

***decree the following:***

1. Effective July 1, 2019, St. Francis Xavier Parish and St. Joseph Parish, both in the Village of Wilmette, will be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form a single new juridic person to be known as SS. Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish;
2. The missions of the extinguished St. Joseph Parish and the extinguished St. Francis Xavier Parish will be subsumed completely into the newly established SS. Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two parishes to be extinguished will be fully and equally parishioners of the new SS. Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish will be the sum of the territories of the two parishes to be extinguished, namely the territory located within these boundaries:

Start at the intersection of Happ Road and Illinois Road,  
East on the south side of Illinois Road to Locust Road,  
North on the east side of Locust Road to Kenilworth Avenue,  
East on the south side of Kenilworth Avenue to Park Drive,  
East on south side of Park Drive to Green Bay Road,  
South on the west side of Green Bay Road to the village boundary of Kenilworth and Wilmette,

Eastward on south and west sides of the village boundary of Kenilworth and Wilmette to 10<sup>th</sup> Street,  
North on the east side of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and extension of 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Lake Michigan,  
South along Lake Michigan to Evanston city limits (between Roslyn and Canterbury),  
West on north side of Evanston city limits to Sheridan Road,  
South on west side of Sheridan Road to city limits just south of extension of Sheridan Place,  
West on north side of city limits to the intersection of Asbury and Isabella,  
West on north side of Isabella to the city boundary of Evanston and Wilmette,  
West on north side of city boundary of Evanston and Wilmette to the intersection of Isabella and Bernard,  
North from the intersection of Isabella and Bernard along the east side of city boundary between Evanston and Wilmette to Old Glenview Road,  
West on north side of Old Glenview Road to city boundary between Evanston and Wilmette,  
South on west side of city boundary between Evanston and Wilmette to the Wilmette and Skokie city boundary,  
West on the north side of the Wilmette and Skokie city boundary to the extension of Wilmette and Glenview city boundary, and  
North on the east side of extension of Wilmette and Glenview city boundary and continuing along Wilmette and Glenview city boundary and its extension to the intersection of Happ Road and Illinois Road.

5. The churches of the two extinguished parishes will be parochial churches of the new SS. Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish, retaining their own titles;

6. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, with due regard for acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the two extinguished parishes and any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the newly established SS. Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish (see canon 121);

7. The documents given to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the meeting of May 28, 2019, will be attached to this decree;

8. In due course, the sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research concerning the two extinguished parishes will be commended to the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago for safe keeping and suitable access; and

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9. Notification of this decree will be given to the pastoral leadership of the two extinguished parishes and to their parishioners. Notification will be given through the parish bulletins, and generally on the archdiocesan website.

*Before hierarchical recourse may be taken against this decree, a petition to reconsider or amend the decree must be delivered to me at the Archbishop Quigley Center within ten (10) useful days from notification of the decree (CIC cc. 1734, 1735, 1737).*

Given this 28<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D. 2019.  
From the Archbishop Quigley Center,  
Chicago, Illinois

  
Archbishop of Chicago

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rev. Ronald P. Stake".

Rev. Ronald P. Stake  
Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments