



Office of the Archbishop
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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-24

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. During the last decade, the total population of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) declined by less than 2%, from 5,903,190 in 2010 to an estimated 5,821,933 in 2020. 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 in the first half of the 20st Century or earlier. 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 of our parishes are unable to support themselves. Consequently, from Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2020, the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$177,109,682.00 in support to parishes and Catholic schools: \$46,332,584.00 to 106 parishes and \$130,777,098.00 to 83 Catholic schools. This includes \$14,777,155.00 during Fiscal Year 2020 alone: \$3,711,999.00 to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 to Catholic schools, mostly parochial schools. Due completely 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.

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 two adjacent parishes located within approximately three and one-half square miles of the Southside of the City of Chicago: St. Bruno Parish (established in 1925

as a personal parish for faithful of Polish origins), 4751 South Harding Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60632-3628; and St. Richard Parish (established 1928), 5030 South Kostner Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60632-4531. St. Bruno Parish is located within the territorial boundaries of St. Richard Parish. Today, both parishes are serving a tri-lingual population of Polish, English, and Spanish-speaking Catholics.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Bruno Parish was 619 (25% Polish, 29% English, and 46% Spanish). The same year, the average Sunday attendance at St. Richard Parish was 1,104 (19% Polish, 50% English, and 31% Spanish). Combined, the two parishes were serving 732 English-speaking faithful, 626 Spanish-speaking faithful, and 365 Polish-speaking faithful. With these figures, even the Polish personal parish of St. Bruno was serving a plurality of Spanish-speaking parishioners (284), and only a minority of Polish-speaking parishioners (155).

In Fiscal Year 2020, St. Bruno Parish had an operating deficit of \$115,192.00, \$33,421.00 in church debt, \$339,279.00 in school debt, and savings of \$70,596.00. That same year, St. Richard Parish had an operating deficit of \$97,195.00, no church debt, and savings of \$599,985.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Bruno Parish included 20 funerals, seven marriages, and 25 Baptisms. In the same period there were 32 funerals, five marriages, and 24 Baptisms at St. Richard Parish. The 2019 combined totals for the two parishes were 52 funerals, 12 marriages, and 49 Baptisms, indicating an average number for a single parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago and a somewhat aging population.

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 its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to debt, continuing deficits, and a 74% decline over 20 years in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Bruno Parish, alongside a current deficit and 59% decline in Sunday Mass attendance over 20 years at St. Richard Parish, changing ethnic demographics in the neighborhood, and fewer priests, change is needed. Furthermore, the Church in this area no longer requires a personal parish in order to serve the Polish-speaking faithful. If the care of souls, evangelization, and discipleship are to be the focus of future mission, the consolidation and conservation of resources under the leadership of a single pastor and pastoral team is needed.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canon 50, canon 121, canon 127 §§1 & 3, canon 166, and canon 515 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me the proposal that the above-mentioned St. Bruno Parish and St. Richard Parish, both in the City of Chicago, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territory of St. Richard Parish, with St. Richard Church designated the parish church. Know also, I

convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* video conference over the internet on May 4, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its May 4th vote of 30 for and one against the proposal, I accepted the Presbyteral Council's advice and now, invoking the Holy Spirit,

I decree the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2021, the above-mentioned St. Bruno Parish and St. Richard Parish shall be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territory of St. Richard Parish. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, Saints Bruno and Richard Parish;
2. The ministries of the two extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new Saints Bruno and Richard Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish boundaries, will be parishioners of the new Saints Bruno and Richard Parish;
4. The territory of the new Saints Bruno and Richard Parish will be 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 two extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new Saints Bruno and Richard Parish (canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. Bruno Parish and the extinguished St. Richard Parish will be churches of the new Saints Bruno and Richard Parish, retaining their own titles, and St. Richard 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 May 4, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;
8. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the two extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the St. Richard 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. Bruno Parish and St. Richard Parish. As soon as possible, the pastors shall inform their parishioners of the decree through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

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Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, signed, and well-argued petition, asking 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 27th day of May, A.D. 2021.
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 MAY 4, 2021, WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE AND WILL BE
AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM**