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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-28

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 20th 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 *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 the union of two neighboring parishes located within the Wicker Square Grouping on the Northside of the City of Chicago: St. Hedwig Parish (established 1888,

personal parish for faithful of Polish origins), 2226 North Hoyne Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60647-3310; and St. John Berchmans Parish (established 1903, personal parish for faithful of Belgian origins, territorial parish since 1925), 2517 West Logan Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois 60647-1926, about six and one-half blocks northwest of St. Hedwig Church. The campus of St. Hedwig Parish is located within the territorial boundaries of St. Mary of the Angels Parish. St. Hedwig Parish and St. John Berchmans Parish serve English and Spanish-speaking faithful, while St. Hedwig Parish and St. Mary of the Angels also serve a small Polish community.

In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Hedwig Parish was 498 (62% English, 21% Spanish, and 17% Polish). The same year, the average Sunday attendance at St. John Berchmans Parish was 502 (79% English and 21% Spanish). With these figures, it is clear the Polish personal parish of St. Hedwig is serving a majority of English-speaking faithful as well as a larger number of Spanish-speaking faithful than Polish-speaking faithful. From its founding, St. Hedwig Parish has been staffed by the Congregation of the Resurrection. This religious institute is committed to the pastoral care of the new parish to be formed.

In Fiscal Year 2019, St. Hedwig Parish had an operating deficit of \$24,105.00 compared to an operating surplus of \$44,735.00 in Fiscal Year 2020. At St. John Berchmans Parish the Fiscal Year 2019 operating deficit was \$113,384.00, in Fiscal year 2020 it was \$64,784.00. On March 31, 2021, St. Hedwig Parish had savings of \$185,649.00, no debt, and \$1,507,760.00 assessed capital needs. On the same date St. John Berchmans Parish had savings of \$391,312.00, church debt of \$137,947.00, and assessed capital needs of \$1,765,050.00.

During Fiscal Year 2019, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Hedwig Parish included 14 funerals, 19 marriages, and 37 Baptisms. In the same fiscal year there 18 funerals, 13 marriages, and 50 Baptisms at St. John Berchmans Parish. The 2019 combined totals for the two parishes were 32 funerals, 32 marriages, and 87 Baptisms, indicating an average number for a single parish of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

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 recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to debt and ongoing deficits at St. John Berchmans Parish, a 59% decline over 20 years in Sunday Mass attendance at St. Hedwig Parish and 44% decline in Sunday Mass attendance over 20 years at St. John Berchmans 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 to serve the Polish-speaking faithful.

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. Hedwig Parish

and St. John Berchmans Parish, both on the Northside of 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. John Berchmans Parish and a portion of territory to be taken from St. Mary of the Angels Parish. St. Hedwig Church is to be designated the parish church of the new parish. 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:

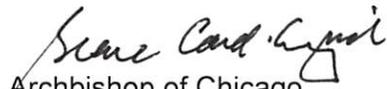
1. Effective July 1, 2021, the above-mentioned St. Hedwig Parish and St. John Berchmans Parish shall be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish within the territory of St. John Berchmans Parish and a portion of territory to be taken from St. Mary of the Angels Parish. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, Saints Hedwig and John Berchmans Parish;
2. The ministries of the two extinguished parishes will be subsumed into those of the new Saints Hedwig and John Berchmans Parish;
3. Each and all the parishioners of the two extinguished parishes, along with the faithful domiciled within the new parish's territorial boundaries, will be parishioners of the new Saints Hedwig and John Berchmans Parish;
4. The territory of the new Saints Hedwig and John Berchmans 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 Hedwig and John Berchmans Parish (canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. Hedwig Parish and the extinguished St. John Berchmans Parish will be churches of the new Saints Hedwig and John Berchmans Parish, retaining their own titles, and St. Hedwig 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. Sacramental records and materials relevant to historical research of the extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the St. Hedwig Church campus, unless otherwise determined by the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center; and

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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. Hedwig Parish, St. John Berchmans Parish, and St. Mary of the Angels 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, 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**