



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

Prot. N. 2023 RMC-5

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 20% since 1970, from 3,366,957 to an estimated 2,693,976 in 2020. In the decade between the census of 2010 and that of 2020, the total resident population in the territory of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) declined by less than 2%, from 5,903,190 to an estimated 5,821,933 in 2020. Over the same ten-year period, the Catholic population of the Archdiocese of Chicago declined by 7% (159,000), from 2,338,000 to 2,179,000.

A considerable number of our parishes were founded more than 100 years ago, in the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century. Many were established for national, linguistic, or ethnic groups that no longer reside in the Archdiocese of Chicago or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished. Some parishes have been struggling to support themselves or are unable to do so. Consequently, from Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2022, the Archdiocese of Chicago provided \$198,651,631.00 in grants to parishes and Catholic schools: \$52,913,911.00 to 119 parishes and \$145,737,720.00 to 99 Catholic schools. This includes \$10,833,455.00 during Fiscal Year 2022 alone: \$3,460,987.00 to parishes and \$7,372,468.00 to Catholic schools, mostly elementary schools. These contributions are due to the generosity of the faithful people of the archdiocese and other gracious donors. However, with rising costs and fewer active parishioners, these subsidies cannot continue as before. 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 seven years ago, inspired by the experience of St. Francis of Assisi before the cross of the ruined church of San Damiano and by 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 has been 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, as well as through possible divisions, unions, and other structural and governance changes.

This decree concerns two suburban parishes located within approximately four and one-half square miles of northwest Cook County: St. Colette Parish (established 1957), 3900 South Meadow Drive, Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008-2903; and St. Cecilia Parish (established 1967), 700 South Meier Road, Mt. Prospect, Illinois 60056-3549. The churches of these two parishes are approximately 3.7 miles apart, a drive of 10 minutes.

In Fiscal Year 2022, a combined total of 1,829 regularly attended one of the nine Sunday Mass celebrated in the two parishes, six in English and three in Spanish. In Fiscal Year 2020, 37% of the combined total of 2,561 attending at both parishes attended the Spanish Masses. For Fiscal Year 2022, 49% of a combined total of 1,829 attended the Spanish Masses. In Fiscal Year 2020 the pre-COVID-19 average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Colette Parish was 837. This is a 55% decline from the 1,859 attending in Fiscal Year 2000. In the same fiscal year (2020), the average Sunday attendance at St. Cecilia Parish was 1,724, a 34% decline from 2,605 attending in Fiscal Year 2000.

In Fiscal Year 2022, St. Colette Parish had an operating deficit of \$284,013.00, savings of \$754,147.00 on deposit with the archdiocesan bank, total church debt of 608,534.00, and \$1,120,200.00 in needed capital expenditures. The same year St. Cecilia Parish had an operating surplus of \$12,371.00, savings of \$164,116.00 on deposit with the archdiocesan bank, and \$1,044,625.00 in needed capital expenditures.

During Fiscal Year 2022, liturgical life outside Sunday Mass at St. Colette Parish included 55 funerals, 10 marriages, and 35 Baptisms. In the same period, St. Cecilia Parish recorded 28 funerals, eight marriages, and 65 Baptisms. The Fiscal Year 2022 totals for the two parishes were 83 funerals, 18 marriages, and 100 Baptisms. These combined figures are comparable to other single parishes in the northwest suburbs 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 recommendation to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to the significant decline in the number of faithful regularly attending Sunday Mass at both parishes; recent operating deficits at both parishes; capital needs greater than \$1,000,000.00 at both parishes; and a continuing decline in the number of priests available to serve as pastors, the Church in this area of the Archdiocese of Chicago will struggle financially and administratively to sustain two parish structures. With the care of souls, evangelization, and discipleship as the focus of future mission, the consolidation and conservation of resources within one new parish is in order.

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. Colette Parish and St.

Cecilia Parish, both in northwest Cook County, Illinois, be extinguished as separate juridic persons in the Church and united to form one new juridic person, a territorial parish named, *ad interim*, SS. Cecilia and Colette Parish, located within the combined territories of the two parishes. St. Cecilia Church is to be designated the parish church of the new parish. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois, on January 16-17, 2023. After hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its January 16th vote of 31 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, 2023, the above-mentioned St. Colette Parish and St. Cecilia Parish, both in northwest suburban Cook County, 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 two parishes. The new parish is to be called, *ad interim*, SS. Cecilia and Colette Parish;
2. The ministries of the two extinguished parishes will become those of the new SS. Cecilia and Colette 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 SS. Cecilia and Colette Parish;
4. The territory of the new SS. Cecilia and Colette Parish will be the combined territories of the extinguished St. Cecilia Parish and the extinguished St. Colette 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 two extinguished parishes, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new SS. Cecilia and Colette Parish (canon 121);
6. The churches of the extinguished St. Cecilia Parish and the extinguished St. Colette Parish will become churches of the new SS. Cecilia and Colette Parish, retaining their own titles. The church of St. Cecilia Parish will 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 16-17, 2023, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;
8. The existing sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the two extinguished parishes will be collected and maintained at the campus of St.

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Cecilia Church, 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. Cecilia Parish and St. Colette Parish. As soon as possible, the pastors shall inform their parishioners of this decree through the parish bulletins 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 16th day of March, A.D. 2023.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Ecclesiastical Notary

Attachments

ONCE APPROVED, CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS DECREE
AND SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
CHICAGO AND THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF
JANUARY 16-17, 2023, WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON THE REQUEST OF ELIGIBLE
PARTIES TO THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS