



Office of the Archbishop
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Prot. N. 2021 RMC-13

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 2,686,530 in 2020. 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 (Cook and Lake Counties in Illinois) had an estimated total population of 5,881,250 in 2018. The 2018 *Annuario Pontificio* indicated our archdiocese had 345 parishes serving a Catholic population of 2,512,000: an average of 7,281 Catholics per parish. According to the same source, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a total population of 11,519,517, with 287 parishes for a Catholic population of 4,362,000: an average of 15,199 Catholics per parish. For the Archdiocese of New York, the figures were 2,656,987 Catholics in 294 parishes, an average 9,037 Catholics per parish. 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 reside in the archdiocese or in the neighborhoods where they once flourished.

Many of our parishes are unable or barely able to support themselves. Consequently, many have been receiving financial subsidies from the archdiocese. 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 was an increase of \$14,777,155.00 over a single year: \$3,711,999.00 more to parishes and \$11,064,156.00 more to Catholic schools. While completely due to the generosity of the faithful people of the archdiocese and other gracious donors, these subsidies cannot continue at this high level, especially in times of enormous economic strain. 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 the parishes need a growing and stable membership and the financial means to support themselves.

Nearly 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 the 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 non-territorial personal parish of St. Stephen, King of Hungary in the West Town neighborhood of the City of Chicago, 2015 West Augusta Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois 60622- 4947. This parish was formed as a personal parish for faithful of Hungarian origins in 1934. At that time, it became the second Hungarian personal parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago. The first, Our Lady of Hungary Parish, in the Burnside district of the City's southeast corner, was extinguished in 1987 and united with neighboring parishes.

In Fiscal Year 2019 the average Sunday Mass attendance at St. Stephen, King of Hungary Parish was 41. In the same year, the parish secured operating revenue of \$82,442.00 and had an operating surplus of \$8,297.00. The parish has been without a pastor for several years and has had difficulty securing a Hungarian-speaking priest for Sunday Mass. Today the parish is unable to provide the full range of parochial ministry. It celebrated four funerals, no marriages, and three Baptisms in 2019. Nonetheless, the parish has been able to support itself. As one of the remaining centers of Hungarian Catholicism in the United States and the only one in Illinois, it looks forward to renewal of life and mission.

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 Commission submitted its recommendations to the pastoral leadership of the archdiocese. Due to the small size of the parish, the consequent inability to provide the full range of parochial ministry, and the want of a Hungarian-speaking priest, a proposal was made to extinguish the parish and relegate its status to a mission of the new Holy Rosary and SS. Mark and Helen Parish, with the pastoral care of the mission given to the pastor of that new parish.

However, the proposal was changed during consideration in the Presbyteral Council. It became a proposal to extinguish the parish and re-establish it as a non-territorial personal mission of the Archdiocese of Chicago for Latin Catholic faithful of Hungarian origins (see canon 516 §2). A priest will be assigned as director of the mission and rector of the mission church.

THEREFORE, know that I, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, according to the norms of canons 50, 127 §§1 & 3, 166, 515 §2, and 516 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, have before me the recommended proposal of the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago, that the above mentioned St. Stephen, King of Hungary Parish in the West Town area of the City of Chicago, be extinguished as a parish and re-established as a non-territorial personal mission of the Archdiocese of Chicago for Latin Catholic faithful of Hungarian origins. Know also, I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago *via* video conference over the internet on January 15, 18-19, 2021. Then, after hearing the Presbyteral Council and receiving its vote of 28 for and four 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. Stephen, King of Hungary Parish shall be extinguished as a parish and re-established as a non-territorial personal mission of the Archdiocese of Chicago for Hungarian faithful of the Latin Church;

2. The mission of the extinguished parish will be subsumed into that of the new St. Stephen, King of Hungary Mission for Hungarian faithful;

3. Each and all the parishioners of the extinguished parish will become members of the new St. Stephen, King of Hungary Mission for Hungarian faithful;

4. Subject to the intention of founders and donors, and with due regard for any acquired rights, the goods and patrimonial rights of the extinguished parish, including St. Stephen, King of Hungary Church, together with any obligations with which they may be burdened, will be those of the new St. Stephen, King of Hungary Mission for Hungarian faithful (see canon 121);

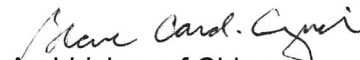
5. The data submitted to the Presbyteral Council on this matter, together with the minutes of the Council meeting of January 15, 18-19, 2021, are to be attached to this decree and will become available upon request to those eligible to receive them;

6. The sacramental records and other materials relevant to historical research pertaining to the extinguished parish will become those of the new St. Stephen, King of Hungary Mission for Hungarian faithful; and

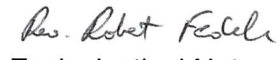
7. Notification of this decree shall be given immediately through the official Website of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The decree shall be conveyed to the administrator of St. Stephen, King of Hungary Parish. As soon as possible, the administrator shall inform his parishioners of this decree through the parish bulletin or other suitable means.

Before hierarchical recourse (appeal) may be taken against this decree, a written, dated, and signed petition asking to revoke or amend the decree must be delivered or sent 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 18th day of March, A.D. 2021.
From Holy Name Cathedral,
Chicago, Illinois


Archbishop of Chicago




Ecclesiastical Notary

THE DATA SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
CHICAGO AND THE MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING
OF JANUARY 15, 18-19, 2021, ARE ATTACHED TO THE FOREGOING DECREE
AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE FOR CANONICAL AFFAIRS
UPON REQUEST FROM THOSE LEGITIMATELY SEEKING THEM