



Lincoln Square Renew My Church Grouping Update November 8, 2019

The Renew My Church Lincoln Square grouping includes St. Hilary Parish and School, St. Matthias Parish and School, Queen of Angels Parish and School, and Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish, all of which are located in Chicago.

Discernment Process

The Renew My Church Lincoln Square grouping began the review and discernment process in spring 2019. The Grouping Feedback and Discernment Team, which was made up of representatives from each of the parishes, met to review and discern the future parish and school structures for the area. Based on their meetings and discussions with the larger parish community, they submitted a report for the Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, which included representatives from across the Archdiocese of Chicago. The commission met to review the feedback report and other materials and information, including demographic data, financial summaries, and parish and grouping trends.

Outcome

Over the course of the past several weeks, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, the archdiocese's auxiliary bishops, and the archdiocese's Presbyteral Council met to discuss the commission's recommendation. Based upon those discussions and prayerful consideration, Cardinal Cupich made the following decisions regarding the grouping's structure.

St. Hilary and Transfiguration of our Lord Parishes will unite as a new parish, effective July 1, 2020. St. Hilary Church will be designated the parish church.

Queen of Angels and St. Matthias Parishes will unite as a new parish, effective July 1, 2020. Queen of Angels Church will be designated the parish church.

For each newly formed parish, the leaders and parishioners will discern possibilities for the name of the new parish, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit their considerations to Cardinal Cupich for his decision on the permanent name of each new parish.

Additionally, the Renew My Church Commission recommended all regularly scheduled Masses transition to each respective parish church (St. Hilary and Queen of Angels) no later than November 28-29, 2020 (First Sunday of Advent 2020).

Schools:

St. Hilary, St. Matthias, and Queen of Angels Schools will remain in their current programs, contingent on maintaining independence from archdiocesan financial support.

St. Hilary will be the parish school of the new parish formed by St. Hilary and Transfiguration Parishes.

Queen of Angels School will be the parish school of the new parish formed by St. Matthias and Queen of Angels Parishes.

St. Matthias School will be governed as an archdiocesan school. A school chaplain, whether a priest assigned to the parish or another priest, will be assigned to the school. Additionally, the pastor of the united parish formed by St. Matthias and Queen of Angels will have a seat on the St. Matthias School Board as of July 1, 2020.



Rationale

Considering Mass attendance and financial resources available to invest in ministry, moving from four parishes to two parishes was deemed by the Renew My Church Commission and Cardinal Cupich as the most viable structure. Uniting St. Hilary and Transfiguration, and uniting St. Matthias and Queen of Angels Parishes, was deemed the strongest foundation for the future under a 2-parish model based on the cultural and geographic affinity between each pairing of parishes noted during the process.

The recommendation to transition all regularly scheduled Masses to the respective parish church of each new parish supports the vision of building a united community by worshipping together in one church. The Renew My Church Commission had significant reservations about continuing regular worship in two sites under the new parishes based on how similar situations in other groupings have proceeded, considering Mass attendance and financial needs.

As the parish church of the newly united parish, St. Hilary Church offers the capacity to accommodate the fruitful growth we hope and pray to see through the future phases of Renew My Church. While deeply saddening, there is a reality of overwhelming capital needs at Transfiguration.

As the parish church of the newly united parish, Queen of Angels Church offers the capacity to accommodate the fruitful growth we hope and pray to see through the future phases of Renew My Church.

The archdiocese recognizes the strong work of the three schools in the grouping. Given financial constraints for supporting schools across the archdiocese, the expectation is these schools will not receive archdiocesan financial aid.

For clarity of governance, St. Matthias School will be an archdiocesan-governed school so one parish does not have two separate parish schools. While St. Matthias would not be governed as a parish school, assigning a school chaplain will support continued strength of Catholic identity. The pastor of the united parish having a seat on the Board will maintain a connection to the parish.

Next Steps

Over the next few months, the archdiocese, Msgr. Kaczorowski, Fr. Funtilla, Fr. McNally, Fr. Zuleta, current pastors of the grouping's parishes, and school leadership will support the communities of each parish to transition to the new parish structures. The archdiocese's Renew My Church Accompaniment Team will work alongside the priest leaders to ensure that the uniting parish communities and staff members are supported through this time of change.

The archdiocese's Priests' Placement Board is actively working to recommend priest leadership for each new parish moving forward and will keep the community apprised in the upcoming weeks.

All parishes of the grouping will embark upon the next phase of the renewal process to become a stronger, more sustainable presence for the future capable of reaching more people in their work of making disciples of Jesus Christ, building communities with one another and inspiring witness in the world around us.