



## **Southeast Suburbs Renew My Church Update: March 10, 2021**

### **Discernment Process**

St. Agnes (Chicago Heights), St. Ann (Lansing), St. Irenaeus, St. James (Sauk Village), St. John (Glenwood), St. Kieran, St. Lawrence O'Toole and St. Paul (Chicago Heights) parishes engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) review and discernment process over the past few months. The Grouping Feedback and Discernment team (GFDT), which was made up of members from each parish community, met to review and discern the future parish structure for the area. Our deepest appreciation goes to the GFDT who prayerfully discerned the parish grouping structure during this challenging time. We also appreciate your patience awaiting a decision.

Based on their meetings and feedback gathered from the larger parish community, they submitted feedback to the archdiocese. The Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, which includes representatives from across the Archdiocese of Chicago, reviewed the feedback and other information, including financial summaries, capital needs and parish trends.

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Perry are grateful to Fr. Siemianowski, Fr. Kalema, Fr. Johnson, Fr. Krolczyk, Fr. McFarlane, Fr. Novick, Fr. Flores Orea and the Grouping Team who gathered throughout the past few months, and all parishioners who offered feedback through the recent discernment process.

### **Outcome**

In the past few 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 parish structure in the Southeast Suburbs.

- **Effective July 1, 2021, St. Ann, St. James, and St. John will unite to form a new parish with two worship sites, a new name, one pastor and one pastoral team.**
  - St. Ann and St. James will both be worship sites for the newly formed parish, with a Mass schedule to be determined by the pastor in consultation with parish leadership; this schedule may differ from the current schedules.
  - St. Ann will be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records are kept.
  - The specific timeline to fully transition Masses to St. Ann and St. James will be determined by the pastor in consultation with parish leadership in the coming months.
  - The local community will discern possibilities for the new name, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit three to five options to Cardinal Cupich.
  - Additionally, the Commission recommends an annual review beginning in 2024 regarding the sustainability of two campuses. This way the united parish's pastor and leadership team can focus on unification for the next three years, prior to the start of the annual review. Note that an earlier review could be prompted if a capital investment decision must be made sooner.
  - Fr. Mark Kalema will be pastor of the newly united parish.

**Please continue to page 2 for information about St. Agnes, St. Irenaeus, St. Kieran, St. Lawrence O'Toole, and St. Paul.**



### **Outcome (continued from page 1)**

- **Effective July 1, 2021, St. Agnes, St. Kieran, and St. Paul will unite to form a new parish with two worship sites, a new name, one pastor and one pastoral team.**
  - A core question during the discernment process was how to connect the St. Paul community to a larger physical space for worship and ministry, knowing it faces constraints with the small physical space at St. Paul.
  - St. Kieran and St. Agnes will both be worship sites for the newly formed parish, with a Mass schedule to be determined by the pastor in consultation with parish leadership; this schedule may differ from the current schedules.
  - St. Kieran will be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records are kept.
  - The specific timeline to fully transition Masses to St. Kieran and St. Agnes will be determined by the pastor in consultation with parish leadership in the coming months.
  - The local community will discern possibilities for the new name, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit three to five options to Cardinal Cupich.
  - Fr. Gary Graf, currently pastor of San Jose Sanchez del Rio Parish in Chicago, will be pastor of the newly united parish.
- **St. Irenaeus and St. Lawrence O'Toole will continue their discernment** with the grouping of parishes in Flossmoor, Country Club Hills, Homewood, and Hazel Crest.

### **Parish Structure Rationale**

- St. Ann, St. James and St. John:
  - St. Ann provides a larger relative size and also reflects Lansing's status as the largest municipality of the three (Lansing, Glenwood, Sauk Village).
  - Even though geographically isolated, including St. James as a second worship site allows us to serve the needs of the community in Sauk Village.
- St. Paul, St. Agnes and St. Kieran:
  - The unification of St. Paul, St. Agnes and St. Kieran forms one parish for the common geographic area of Chicago Heights.
  - St. Kieran provides the capacity needed to celebrate Mass as a combined parish.
  - St. Agnes allows flexibility to have an English Mass and a Spanish Mass concurrently within the parish.

### **Next Steps**

- Parish leadership and parishioners will discern possibilities for the name of each new parish, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit their considerations to Cardinal Cupich for his decision on the permanent name of the new parish.
- The RMC staff will work with St. Irenaeus and St. Lawrence O'Toole to begin planning for discernment with parishes in Flossmoor, Country Club Hills, Homewood, and Hazel Crest.
- The parish communities will embark upon the next phase of renewal, focusing on strong evangelization to the world around us. The renewal process calls us 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.