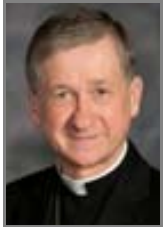


**ARCHBISHOP CUPICH'S COLUMN: RENEW MY CHURCH—
CREATING COMMUNITIES OF COMMUNITIES
CATHOLIC NEW WORLD, JUNE 26-JULY 9, 2016**

The following is adapted from remarks delivered by Archbishop Cupich at the Presbyteral Assembly, which is gathering of archdiocesan priests, June 7.



Last September I urged you to see this task of renewing the church of Chicago, not in terms of a purely organizational response to financial and demographic data or a political calculation of what the people will accept. Rather, we have to approach this as a communal discernment process. It is part of our spiritual journey together, asking where is the Spirit moving us to take up in a fresh way through our parishes the mission of Christ to evangelize, make disciples and transform Chicagoland and the world in Christ's love?

I want to address two questions: 1. What does Renew My Church mean for our vision of parish life? 2. What does it mean for our vision of being a priest ministering in the Archdiocese of Chicago?

What Renew My Church means for our vision of parish life.

Our life as church here in Chicago has been organized around the parish. This has created loyalties and deep affection on the part of our people for their own parishes, and has motivated extraordinary generosity and devotion. At the same time, we have to recognize that the vibrancy of these parishes could be taken for granted in an earlier era, given the social fabric and connectedness that defined our neighborhoods and society at large. These neighborhoods were marked by residential stability, social mores and shared values, and a familiarity among people that was often based on similar ethnic relationships. But the world is much different today, and the social and cultural infrastructures that buttressed our parish life have evaporated to a large extent.

Today, people are more mobile in their residential patterns. Their cohesion of values has been disrupted if not destroyed by a closed-end secularization, by globalization and economic forces beyond their control, by new forms of communication and by an entertainment industry that reshapes how we see one another.

The social structures our parishes once relied on to support what they were doing as individual communities are no longer present for the most part. We need to create a new kind of networking, a set of relationships among ourselves in which we are not independent, living in our own silos, but interdependent. As parishes, the challenge is to become communities of communities that are stronger and more effective in mission than when we worked in isolation. We need to move beyond a model of parish that is independent and self-reliant.

What Renew My Church means for our vision of being a priest ministering in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

If we are moving to a vision of our parishes as communities of communities, we as priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago have to take co-responsibility for all of the parishes, not just our own. What I am asking you to do is to look at the parishes the way the vicars and I do, knowing that each parish is stronger to the degree that all the parishes are strong.

Of course, Pope Francis is recapturing this sense as he reinvigorates the notion of a synodal church. We here must also be a synodal church in which we walk together, taking responsibility for the whole of the people of God, entrusted to the pastoral care we share with one another as brother priests. A synodal church moves forward as a pilgrim people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, walking together at a patient pace and with an awareness that the experience of the journey will be itself a grace as we move in ways that speak of conversion and renewal.

As I have noted earlier, this will cost all of us something. This process of renewal will demand a specific spiritual challenge for us priests. It is not new. It is a paradox rooted in the Gospel. We are called to live and serve with complete investment and, at the same time, total detachment. We all invest ourselves heart and soul into the lives of our communities. And we must continue to do that, but acknowledge that we need to do it in even more creative and imaginative ways.

(continued)

And this will take stepping out of our comfort zone, our patterns of behavior that have become familiar and comforting; letting go of our particular designs, so that a greater good can flourish and so that the work is most evidently the work of God and not the work our hands. This really is a challenge — complete investment and total detachment — but it is rooted in the Gospel.

I am convinced that what will keep us focused as a presbyterate, among all the various things that preoccupy our attention and the twists and turns this process will involve, is our common reliance on God’s love to heal and renew us. That common commitment to trust in God’s providential love will steady us, for it is that very love that we are called to foster in those entrusted to our pastoral care. Spiritually, the challenge for us is to stay focused on the *unum necessarium*, the one necessary thing, namely holding fast to God’s love.

I have said it before, if we stay together and work together, we can and will bring about the renewal that Christ is asking of us in this process. That will start with each of us committing to a new understanding of what it means to be church that goes beyond parish and a new understanding of what it means to be a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago. I invite you to walk with me so that together we can lead our people. I cannot do it alone. I need your leadership and your commitment.

OUR TIME TO SHARE: A CANCER SUPPORT GROUP...

for cancer patients and survivors continues to serve the St. Francis de Sales community. Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 13 at 7 p.m. in the Church Gathering Space. We offer a safe place to share, to release, to offer comfort and to be comforted...a place to feel loved. Strength, hope, faith and courage...this is what we can offer each other. Please contact Mary Manson at (847) 382-3051 and let’s begin our journey together.



Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves.”

- Matthew 11:28-29

FACE THE TRUTH TOUR

The Pro-Life Action League invites you to join the upcoming “Face the Truth” Tour, an annual pro-life public education initiative that reaches tens of thousands of people with the reality of abortion.

From July 8-16, pro-life volunteers will hold signs at major intersections throughout Northeast Illinois, depicting the beauty of life in the womb as well as the horrible injustice done to the unborn victims of abortion. The Tour will be in Lake Zurich on the morning of Thursday, July 14, at the intersection of Rand Road (Route 12) and Main Street (Route 22) from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

The Face the Truth Tour changes hearts and minds, guides post-abortive women and men to healing and peace, and saves babies from abortion. For more information on this powerful pro-life campaign, including the complete Tour schedule, please visit ProLifeAction.org.

Thank you and God bless,

Judi Stephens, St. Francis de Sales Parishioner

“It is God who gives life. Let us respect and love human life, especially vulnerable life in a mother’s womb.”

- Pope Francis

COME AND LISTEN DISCERNMENT RETREAT Daughters of St. Mary of Providence

Who: Women interested in Religious Life (ages 17 to 35)

What: Time apart to listen to God

When: July 20—24, 2016

Where: Formation House, Mount St. Joseph,
24955 N. Hwy. 12, Lake Zurich, IL 60047

To register: Contact Sr. Brenda by July 10,
(734) 845-4600 or sisterbrendam@gmail.com

