

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As a new year begins, I want to assure you of my prayers for you, your families, and your parish communities. I also want to share some important information about *Renew My Church*.

As you may already know, *Renew My Church* is an archdiocesan initiative that involves all the people of the archdiocese and their faith communities. The goal of *Renew My Church* is to make our parishes more vital and more sustainable. We do this not on our own initiative but in response to the call of Christ, which was first heard by those disciples recounted in today's gospel. The call is the same as it was in those early days of the Church: to be His disciples and take responsibility for carrying on His mission in our time. The place to start is by working together to make our parishes vibrant communities that form missionary disciples of Jesus. This will also mean being realistic about our limited human and material resources and evaluating how our present structures may need to be organized differently to keep pace with changing realities.

A very important part of the process of *Renew My Church* are the parish groupings that will work to plan for the future and discern where God is leading us. After receiving consultation and feedback from you, the priests of the diocese, and parish pastoral councils, we are announcing the groupings today. Your parish will be part of a grouping that will enable you to assess, plan, and discern how best to meet the needs of the future in a way that is both reasonable and in conformity with God's will for us.

Each grouping will have guidance for its process of reflection and discernment. Everything, however, begins with building relationships across parishes in a given grouping. That means getting to know each other and perhaps sharing some common projects or events, such as retreats, lectures, or community service for those in need. With future guidance and facilitation, this will develop in more specific planning and discernment directions. Today, your pastor will share a list of the parishes in your grouping.

Renew My Church will undoubtedly involve leaving behind familiar patterns and demand that we move outside our comfort zones. In a word, it will require sacrifice, but that has always been true for the Church whenever we have taken up new challenges. I am convinced that we are up to the task, and willing to do whatever it takes to build our capacity to pass on our faith to future generations. That is what is at stake in the *Renew My Church* process. I encourage you to become involved and pray for its success.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Card. Blase J. Cupich".

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago

RENEW MY CHURCH UPDATE & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Thank you for your continued input as we have been discerning the groupings for Renew My Church. We are grateful for the time and wisdom your leaders have provided in their feedback on the grouping proposals and your patience in waiting for confirmation of the groupings. The vicariate team has reviewed the feedback and is pleased to provide you with the final groupings. The final grouping for St. Francis de Sales also includes the following:

- Santa Maria del Popolo in Mundelein
- St. Mary of the Annunciation in Mundelein
- Transfiguration in Wauconda
- Frassati Catholic Academy/Catholic Consortium of Lake County



Any questions, please contact Father Ryan directly at (847) 726-4723.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How were groupings determined?

All parishes and schools in the Archdiocese have been assigned to be part of a grouping. Groupings were determined through a consultative process that included feedback and input from Archdiocese and parish leadership—vicars, deans, pastors, parish councils, and lay leadership.

How many different groupings are there in the Archdiocese?

There are about 100 groupings in the Archdiocese. All parishes and schools have been assigned a grouping based on geography (the parishes and schools are relatively close in proximity), similar communities served and other commonalities and affinities (i.e. parishioners occasionally attend Mass at more than one parish in the grouping).

I know my grouping, what are the other Archdiocese groupings?

The groupings across the Archdiocese will be available on the Archdiocese website soon:
<https://www.archchicago.org/renew>

Are all parishes and schools in a grouping?

Yes. All parishes and schools in the Archdiocese have been assigned a grouping.

Now that groupings have been determined, what is the next step?

The next step within groupings will be to focus mainly on ways to build relationships across the parishes and schools. Pastors will receive a memo along with their grouping that details some of the “do’s” and “don’ts” for groupings during the time from now until they would begin the structured planning process. A small number of groupings will begin this process as “pilots” in the New Year. All groupings will be sequenced into the planning process over the course of the next 3-4 years. This sequence is not yet determined.

Who leads the process for each grouping? Does each parish or school select a representative?

The Archdiocese will provide an outside facilitator to help lead each grouping’s “grouping team” through the planning process. The grouping team will be comprised of the pastors and representatives from each parish. If there are schools or a school in the grouping, school leadership and school families will be a part of the grouping team, along with the pastors and representatives from each parish.

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Is the purpose of *Renew My Church* to close some churches and schools?

No. The focus of *Renew My Church* is to ensure we have vital parishes and schools that form missionary disciples. Some groupings will determine their existing configuration should remain in place, but they may need to identify new opportunities for collaboration to better serve a community. Where that is not possible due to the challenges faced, new models will be considered. Some examples of possible models include: multiple parishes sharing a pastor, a merging of several schools into one school, or a set of parishes merging to form one parish with multiple churches.

In some cases, closures will be unavoidable. Each grouping, through the planning process, will explore and discern all of the possible, applicable models. There is no pre-determined number for how many parishes or schools will merge or close, nor how many Church and school buildings might close.

Will my parish or school close or merge due to *Renew My Church*?

The goal of *Renew My Church* is to ensure that all parishes and schools are vibrant, vital, and life-giving, and have the resources they need to carry out the mission of the Church. In some areas, that is not possible today. While we know difficult decisions will have to be made, we hope to find reassurance in that those decisions will be balanced by the more important questions: *How will this enable us to carry out Christ's mission in the communities we serve? How will this lead to renewal?*

Does each grouping include a school or schools?

No, not all groupings have a school. However, all groupings will evaluate how to provide parishioners access to Catholic schools and how all parishes will support Catholic schools.

Will there be parish or school closures that happen outside of *Renew My Church*?

Renew My Church is a multi-year planning process. Critical decisions will continue to be made to address immediate needs of our parish and school communities.

What does *Renew My Church* mean for my school or parish?

Renew My Church calls us to face our challenges and boldly reimagine what it means to be Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago. We must be willing to leave behind familiar ways of doing things to carry out Christ's mission in the communities we serve. Cardinal Cupich has called us to dream big, responding in faith to take up the work of building up the Church in our time.

How can I help with *Renew My Church*?

One way to begin supporting *Renew My Church* is to learn more about the effort by visiting <https://www.archchicago.org/renew>. There you will find more articles Cardinal Cupich has written about what *Renew My Church* means for our Church.

A PRAYER FOR "RENEW MY CHURCH" FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Lord Jesus, you speak to us today, as you spoke to holy men and women who have gone before us. In every age and in our own time, you call to us and say: *Renew My Church*. Pour out the gift of your Holy Spirit upon us, and so enable us...

to hear you clearly; to listen to each other attentively; to imagine our future boldly;
to discern your direction wisely; to persevere in your holy will courageously; to stay together in charity;
to surrender our own plans readily; to embrace the greater good; to hand on your gifts to future generations.

May we remain in the holy company of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the apostles, and all the saints. May their example and presence inspire us with patient confidence in the work of your grace.

We ask this of you who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.