



**Jefferson/Portage Park and Old Irving Park/Addison  
Renew My Church Update: December 18, 2020**

**Discernment Process**

St. Constance, Our Lady of Victory, St. Pascal and St. Robert Bellarmine Parishes, along with Pope Francis Global Academy, were grouped together and engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) “Discernment and Decision” process through October 2020. St. Bartholomew, St. Viator, and St. Wenceslaus Parishes were also grouped together and engaged in the RMC “Discernment and Decision” process through October 2020.

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 feedback and other information, including financial summaries, capital needs and parish trends. After this review, the RMC Commission asked the St. Bartholomew Grouping Feedback and Discernment (GFDT) members to join the first grouping for additional discernment to allow a more fruitful response to Hispanic ministry needs to the west/northwest.

The adjusted grouping team continued with three additional discernment meetings in November and December and provided an update to the RMC Commission earlier this December. The RMC Commission is grateful for the continued discernment and has since completed a full recommendation.

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Manz are grateful to the GFDT members of all seven parishes and Fr. Barwikowski, Fr. Wyrzykowski, Fr. Dees, Fr. Fackler, Fr. O’Connell, Fr. Render, and Fr. Arevalos, as well as the parishioners, the Vicariate Team, the Presbyteral Council and RMC Commission who offered feedback through the recent discernment process. Your perseverance was admirable, particularly during these difficult months of the pandemic.

**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 and school structures in Jefferson/Portage Park and Old Irving Park/Addison:

**St. Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine will unite as a new parish.**

**St. Bartholomew, Our Lady of Victory, and St. Pascal will unite as a new parish.**

**St. Viator and St. Wenceslaus will unite as a new parish.**

**All of the new parishes above will take effect July 1, 2021. Each new parish will be formed under a new name. The new name will be decided by Cardinal Cupich after reviewing options proposed by each new parish’s leadership.**

Please continue to page 2 for more information.



The Renew My Church Commission has additionally recommended:

*St. Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine:*

- St. Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine Churches will both continue to host a regular Mass schedule for the newly united parish.
- This united parish will be the host location for all parish-based Polish ministry in these two groupings.

*St. Bartholomew, Our Lady of Victory and St. Pascal:*

- St. Bartholomew and St. Pascal Churches will both continue to host a regular Mass schedule for the newly united parish.
- The Polish Mass currently at St. Pascal will cease as of July 1, 2021.
- As part of expanding Hispanic ministry presence west, at least one Spanish language Mass will be celebrated as part of the regularly weekend Mass schedule at St. Pascal.
- Regularly scheduled Masses at Our Lady of Victory will cease no later than the first Sunday of Advent 2021.

*St. Viator and St. Wenceslaus*

- St. Viator and St. Wenceslaus Churches will both continue to host a regular Mass schedule for the newly united parish.
- The school on St. Wenceslaus campus will be marketed for sale to generate proceeds to invest in enhanced ministry in the new parish.

**Schools:**

All of the schools will continue to operate, with governance changes to align with the new parish structure.

St. Robert Bellarmine School will serve as the parish school of the united parish of St. Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine. St. Constance School will continue under its current program and become a school governed by the archdiocese. Both schools will receive pastoral support from the parish priests.

Pope Francis Global Academy will serve as the parish school of the united parish of St. Bartholomew, Our Lady of Victory, and St. Pascal. St. Bartholomew School will continue under its current program and become a school governed by the archdiocese. Both schools will receive pastoral support from the parish priests.

St. Viator will serve as the parish school of the united parish of St. Viator and St. Wenceslaus.

**Parish Structure Rationale**

Forming three new parishes from the seven parishes offers a parish structure to meet the needs of each neighborhood, expand the geographic reach for Hispanic ministry further west and north, and continue to support strong Polish ministry within the local area. Each of the three parishes is of relatively similar parishioner size and annual operating revenue.

Concluding regularly scheduled Masses at Our Lady of Victory is deemed necessary by the Commission to create a structure manageable for the parish and to offer a path to explore all options for selling the property to provide resources to invest in ministry in the new parish and reduce expenses.

*Please continue to page 3 for the final page of information.*



## **School Structure Rationale**

None of the schools will have structural change, however enrollment and financial concerns continue to impact St. Constance and St. Bartholomew schools. Generous donors are committed to supporting those schools and their sustainability will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

School governance changes provide a structure that allows each pastor to have administrative responsibilities for only one school while retaining each school's pastoral connection to the parish.

## **Next Steps**

The archdiocese's Priests' Placement Board is actively working to identify candidates to lead each of the three new parishes. Additional information will be shared with each community as it becomes available.

Once a pastor has been named for each of the three new parishes, parish leadership 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 the new parish.

The united parish community will embark upon the next phase of the renewal process, Operations Transition followed by "Building the New Reality," 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.