



Wicker Square Renew My Church Update: May 10, 2021

Discernment Process

St. Aloysius, St. Hedwig, St. John Berchmans and St. Mary of the Angels Parishes engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) review and discernment process through the past few months. The Grouping Feedback and Discernment team (GFDT), which was made up of members from each 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 of the global pandemic.

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 and parish trends.

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Lombardo are grateful to Fr. Diaz, Fr. Wojciechowski, Fr. Marshall, Fr. Waiss 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 Wicker Square.

- **Effective July 1, 2021, St. Hedwig and St. John Berchmans will unite as a new parish, continuing to use both churches for Mass.**
 - As one parish, the two communities will have one pastor and one pastoral team.
 - St. Hedwig will be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records will be kept.
 - The local community will discern possibilities for the new permanent name, within guidelines provided by the archdiocese, and submit three to five options to Cardinal Cupich.
 - The united parish's Mass schedule at each location after July 1 will be a priority topic for the pastor and parish leadership in the coming months.
 - There are no structural changes to St. John Berchmans School.
 - Fr. Tom Wojciechowski will serve as pastor of the newly united parish and Fr. Pat Marshall will serve as Associate Pastor and chaplain of St. John Berchmans School.

- **Additionally, the commission recommends that St. Aloysius become an additional worship site for the new parish formed by unifying St. Helen, Holy Rosary and St. Mark.**
 - Fr. Claudio Diaz will serve as the pastor of the newly united parish.

- **St. Mary of the Angels will remain in its current structure.**
 - Fr. John Waiss will continue to serve as pastor.



Parish Structure Rationale

- St. Hedwig and St. John Berchmans uniting together allows for continued outreach to the communities of Logan Square and Wicker Park.
 - While there will not be any structural changes at St. John Berchmans school, the unification of two parishes, and the new pastor serving the united parish, is a change. The united parish now doubles the opportunity for increased enrollment in the School and Religious Education program.
 - As a united parish, the St. John Berchmans Catholic school and united religious education ministry continues to form our children as young disciples for the future.
 - The proximity of the two parishes allows for ease of ministry between the two sites.
 - We are especially grateful that Fr. Pat Marshall and Fr. Tom Wojciechowski will be able to serve together because they have such great passion and dynamism for what will be the united community of St. John Berchmans and St. Hedwig.
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- The addition of St. Aloysius to the parish to the south allows for a united ministry amongst the Puerto Rican community of Humboldt Park.
 - The combined parishes worshipping at St. Helen and St. Aloysius provides financial stability and united worship.
 - This unification also allows for ongoing evangelization to the neighborhood surrounding the newly united parish.
 - As a united parish, the St. Helen Catholic school and the united religious education ministry continues to form our children as young disciples for the future.
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- St. Mary of the Angels continues as a parish without structural change, dedicated to making disciples for future evangelization.

Next Steps

Parish leadership and parishioners will discern possibilities for the name of the unification of St. Hedwig and St. John Berchmans parish. Parish leadership and parishioners of St. Aloysius will join with the newly uniting parish to the south to discern possibilities for the name of that parish. These will fall within guidelines provided by the archdiocese and be submitted for consideration to Cardinal Cupich, for his decision on the permanent name of the new parish.

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.