

**Orland-Tinley Renew My Church Update: May 11, 2021****Discernment Process**

St. Elizabeth Seton, St. Francis of Assisi, St. George, St. Julie Billiart, St. Michael, Our Lady of the Woods and St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr 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 Wypych are grateful to Fr. Corcoran, Fr. Sowa, Fr. Seaman, Fr. Villaverde, Fr. Kurucz, Fr. Foley, Fr. Bernas 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 parishes in the Orland-Tinley grouping.

- **All seven parishes will remain in their current structure.**
 - After a deep examination of possible unifications, there will not be any unification of parishes.
 - Part of the uniqueness of this Orland Tinley grouping is that the parishes are well situated, in that they cover a large geographic area.
 - Further, the parishes host a wide variety of ministries that serve the Catholic population of the area.
 - However, we know that many factors and generational trends have left our parishes without large segments of our population, namely young adults aged 18-30.
 - Cardinal Cupich affirms the grouping team's realization that continued work, especially in the area of evangelization and re-evangelization of parishioners, will be necessary into the future to reground people in their discipleship. We know that only disciples can invite and inspire other disciples. The Renew My Church imperative of making disciples will continue to be the mission into the decades to come.

- **Regarding the thoughtful reflection on the Vision Council:**
 - Seven parishes coming together as a grouping, over the last five months, provided an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the current structure and



allowed for a shared realization of the necessary work on evangelization and mission that is to come.

- Our study of effective evangelization has found that the best work on evangelization happens at the parish level. It is here, at the parish level, that we can support one another on our faith journey in a more intentional way.
- The Vision Council may be best suited to check in with one another on best practices around evangelization, the offering of entry points for those searching for deeper connection with faith, and growing disciples.
- However, without a clear governance structure, best practice sharing on evangelization and making disciples would seem to be the best use of your collective generosity and service. A Vision Council might be served well as a network of mutual support, rather than a governing body.
- The Parish Vitality Coordinator, Nick Carlson, will continue to walk with you as you share those best practices of evangelization.

Next Steps

The parish communities will embark upon the next phase of renewal, focusing on strong evangelization to the world around us. Specifically, through the work of the Parish Vitality Coordinator, Nick Carlson, and the Evangelization team of the Archdiocese, your parishes will continue to build the new reality, focused on deepening discipleship, and supporting disciples in becoming missionary disciples for the work of evangelization. The renewal process calls us to become a stronger, more sustainable presence for the future, capable of reaching more people by sharing our discipleship in Jesus Christ, building communities with one another and inspiring witness in the world around us.