

# **Community Discernment and Planning Feedback Summary for the Jefferson Park & Portage Park Grouping**

## **Submitted to the *Renew My Church* Standards and Recommendations Commission**

**October 2020**

### **Dear Commission Members,**

The members of the Jefferson Park & Portage Park Grouping, representing the existing parishes of St. Constance, St. Pascal, St. Robert Bellarmine, and Our Lady of Victory, have participated in a process of data review and conversation regarding the future of our Catholic community. This document presents a summary of the feedback we have assembled through discussions with each other as well as members of our parishes. While the circumstances of the pandemic have contributed to a feeling of uncertainty, we have evaluated our existing parish structures and acknowledge that changes are needed to preserve the practice of our faith and enable ourselves to more effectively provide ministry within our community moving forward. We thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration of the document we are presenting for review.

### **Feedback Summary**

The Jefferson Park & Portage Park Renew My Church team came together in a spirit of community benefit and shared sacrifice. These values as well as consideration of the geography and demographics of the area and attention to the Church's mission to "carry out the work of Christ on Earth" fueled the multi-month discussion. During RMC parish update meetings, a notable number of parishioners voiced trust issues between the Northwest side community and the Archdiocese due to the perceived mishandling of school closures in recent years. While the RMC communication process has helped assuage these feelings, we appreciate the Executive Committee's awareness of this history in making future decisions, particularly if a church is designated for closure.

As a group, we ask the Executive Committee of the Renew My Church Standards and Recommendations Commission to discern this document in the light of these themes:

## Evangelization

The Catholic Church strives to bring people into a personal relationship with Christ through sacraments, liturgical preparation, and masses. But bringing people to Christ and the Church requires radical hospitality--reaching out to people in the community, not just expecting them to come to the church. The parishioners of Our Lady of Victory, St. Constance, St. Robert Bellarmine, and St. Pascal bring Jefferson Park/Portage Park to Christ through a variety of ministries. ***The new parish should meet the needs of clergy and parishioners engaged in social justice and sacramental life.***

- Offer outreach to non-Catholics in the community, particularly youth. One example is hosting social events for local teenagers, including non-Catholics
- Maintain availability of opportunities to encounter the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic Adoration, advertising this to all ethnic groups within our local community
- Reach out to school families who are not attending weekly Mass to invite more complete and active participation in their faith and the parish
- Provide opportunities to re-encounter Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith through engaging speaker events and historical liturgical events.

## Community

The population of Jefferson Park/Portage Park is growing and a considerable portion of the growth is driven by younger generations and young families moving into the neighborhood. While there is a long-standing commitment to the Polish community in the area, a growing number of Hispanic families are joining the community, which demands the need for Spanish language outreach and ministry. Additionally, Our Lady of Victory (OLV), the site most likely to close in all the scenarios, is the oldest parish and has a large number of older, life-long parishioners who will find the loss of their church difficult to accept and the expectation to attend mass at a new location physically prohibitive. ***The new parish should meet the needs of a multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multilingual community.***

- Continue supporting local organizations and under-resourced members of the community through food pantries, clothing and supply drives
- Coordinate accessible vehicular transportation to Mass and other sacramental services for community members who live too far from a church to walk
- Keep OLV open as a worship site for the short term and possibly for a longer term depending on growth within the parish
- Celebrate Mass in English, Polish, and Spanish
- Evaluate each parish's community-focused ministries for best path forward in a new parish configuration (examples - St Vincent DePaul Society, Scouts, Women's and Men's Clubs, Social Justice groups)

## Education

Loyalty to and emotional identity with the schools of St. Constance, St. Robert Bellarmine, and Pope Francis Global Academy has been at the heart of discussions within the RMC grouping and in the parish town hall meetings. Attending the same parish school as one's parents and grandparents is a valued tradition for many families, and the possibility of losing this legacy creates anxiety. Additionally, parish educational enterprises are not confined to the schools. Each offers RCIA and Faith Formation programs that integrate faith into family life (not just "religion" classes). ***The new***

***parish should support an accessible, Catholic-based Parish School that promotes Catholic identity and values for parishioners and guests at various stages of growth in their Catholic faith.***

- Continue to engage parents of infants and toddlers in ministry that supports Catholic upbringing in today's culture, and offer programs for parents and children to attend at the school to foster community building among parents and their children before school age
- Enhance social activities and school sports programs that instill cooperation, fairness, and healthy competition
- Enrich opportunities for adult re-engagement with their faith through short and long-term workshops, Bible studies, and reflective activities
- Expand religious education opportunities to students outside of the Catholic systems, focusing on whole-family activities and renewal

## **Conclusions**

**Scenario #1 seems the best suited to meet the RMC criteria.**

*Parish #1: St. Pascal and OLV unite with the OLV campus closes, with PFGA the parish school*

*Parish #2: St. Constance and St. Robert unite to form one parish with two schools.*

St. Pascal and OLV are the most traditional in liturgical and ecclesiological outlook. The OLV resources from the sale of buildings and land would provide St. Pascal, having lost its Polish mass, the resources to develop an outreach to the Hispanic community that is moving into the south and east quadrants of our neighborhood and to provide the financial ability to keep the new parish vital and sustainable as PFGA moves toward sustainability. It would be crucial that the OLV worship site be kept open for at least a year to allow the communities to integrate and take ownership as well as preserve and integrate the vibrant spiritual and devotional life that is an integral part of the OLV identity.

St. Constance and St. Robert's English-speaking communities have the more modern liturgical and ecclesiological outlook, and already cooperate on several ministries. The two churches are close enough geographically to walk to both locations, thus preserving this important characteristic of the two communities. Both parishes have the resources to sustain a new, vibrant multicultural parish. There a large number of Polish speaking parishioners at St. Robert that would be welcomed into the Polish community of St. Constance. The two parish schools could maintain their identities and viability due to the funding models of the schools.

The biggest challenge would be the integration of the Polish and English-speaking communities of the two parishes while preserving the religious and cultural values of each. This could be done by having ministries of each language group at each parish, and by having co-pastors through the integration of the two parishes. There would still be a need for parish priests that are fluent in one or both languages.

**Scenario #2 is the next most likely to meet the RMC criteria, but, while Parish #1 would succeed, the probability of forming Parish #2 is very low.**

*Parish #1: St. Constance and OLV unite and OLV campus closes*

*Parish #2: St. Pascal and St. Robert unite and one parish closes*

St. Constance and OLV would have the resources to be vital and sustainable. Closing OLV campus and selling the property, while keeping the church open for at least one more year would be successful for the same reasons as OLV and St. Pascal uniting in Scenario #1. More challenging is that most of the OLV school families have already sent their children elsewhere and may not add to the viability of the St. Constance school.

St. Pascal and St. Robert would have the resources as one parish, but it is extremely doubtful that a large enough number of parishioners from either location would be part of a new community if one church closes to make sustainability a reality. The parishes are not compatible in ecclesiology or style of worship, the parishes are not within walking distance and Irving Park Rd. is a major obstacle to traffic. It would be virtually impossible to maintain two separate school identities in one new parish, or one potentially viable school would have to close and most school families would not attend the other school.

St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory had already undergone a school consolidation five-years before this grouping's activation, to form the current iteration of Pope Francis Global Academy. Through this combination, a legally binding endowment was created that financially links St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory to one another. Any scenario that does not include both St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory in the same parish, will have to facilitate the dissolution of the Pope Francis Global Academy Endowment.

The other Scenarios are not likely to be viable, sustainable or in keeping with the vision of RMC.

**Scenario #3: St. Pascal remains a stand-alone parish which is contrary to the themes of community benefit & shared sacrifice.**

**Scenario #4: St. Constance remains a stand-alone parish which is contrary to the themes of community benefit & shared sacrifice.**

**Scenario #5: All four parishes combine to form one new parish while embracing of community creates a parish difficulty to administer and muddies parish identities.**

## **Conclusion**

The Jefferson Park & Portage Park RMC Grouping Team would again like to thank the Executive Committee of the Renew My Church Standards and Recommendations Commission for its prayerful consideration of the document we are presenting for review. We pray the reorganization of our

parishes allows us not only to continue the evangelism, community outreach, and educational foundations we have discussed in this document but also to meet the aspirational goals we cannot undertake due to lack of financial, human, time, and energy resources in the current parish configuration. It is the Grouping Team’s hope that a parish renewal would allow the new parish(es) to optimize our valuable resources to focus on the following missions:

- Present the person of Jesus Christ, particularly to young people, in a compelling manner using appropriate technology and other media that respond to the current cultural realities (social distance, reliance on social media)
- Bear visible witness to the compassion of Christ through social justice outreach efforts for the entire community, whether or not they are Catholic
- Enhance social justice outreach to integrate a Christian response to the poor/needly in our community
- Develop vocations to the family that integrate Catholic faith in our daily lives, promoting the personal call to relationship with Jesus. This will ultimately bear fruit in better people, vocations to marriage, priesthood and the religious life
- Vision beyond the current reality of pastoral and administrative staff structures to allow the clergy to focus on their mission and pastoral care
- Enhance communication staff and resources to provide the appropriate marketing/branding “package” for the message, using new media technologies for outreach, education, and communication

**Submitted respectfully with the endorsement of the pastors and parish delegates,**

<b>St. Constance</b>	<b>St. Pascal</b>	<b>St. Robert Bellarmine</b>	<b>Our Lady of Victory</b>
Fr. Paweł Barwikowski	Fr. Elliott Dees	Fr. Neil Fackler	Fr. Michael Wyrzykowski
Jim Gordon	Dc. Gene Kummerer	Paula Diaz	Dc. Michael Ahern
Eva Panczyk	Eli Argamaso	Bill Dohl	Rich Beddome
Roman Harmata	Sharon Kells	Paul Eifert	Julie Dylegowski
Magdalena Kaczor	Melissa Summers	Tina Puralewski	Lizbeth Heinrich
Teresa Milewski	Jason Yedlinski	Catherine Tenzillo	Linda Mendoza

**Scenario 1: 2 Parishes, 3 churches total**

- **Parish 1: St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory unite & Our Lady of Victory closes**
- **Parish 2: St. Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine unite**

**RENEW  
CHURCH  
ASPIRATION**

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***How well does this scenario challenge the grouping to move beyond maintaining current structures to invest a higher percentage of time and resources in ministry?***

***How will this scenario support vitality and stability for the long-term (10+ years), considering demographic and parishioner trends?***

1) *Scenario One* requires each of our parishes to embrace the process of spiritual renewal. This scenario creates a permanent bond between parishes and will only be successful through collaboration and the development of a unified purpose. This combination of parishes does come with potential problems. However, because the parishes involved already have working relationships to some extent, the problems that they encounter should not be insurmountable. This, in turn, will provide the pastors of the newly formed parishes to focus more of their time and energy on their ministry and mission.

In order to work toward long term goals, *Parish One* must appropriately handle the eventual closure of the Our Lady of Victory (OLV) parish. Understanding the dire nature of the situation, the OLV team hopes that the pastor of the newly formed parish considers using the church at OLV as a worship site for as long as is financially feasible and operationally possible.

Gradual closure of the OLV facilities would be the preferred outcome for the OLV team, as it would provide an opportunity for their parishioners to grieve the loss of their parish. By doing so, it may provide the pastor with multiple opportunities to engage the members of the OLV community and make them active participants in the development of the new parish.

The combination of parishes in *Parish Two* makes sense in many ways. St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Constance are in very close proximity to one another, have a shared parish history, and have churches that are similar in their stylistic aesthetic. These two parishes also share several joint ministries, so these connections, and the fact that this scenario allows for both churches to remain open as places of worship, should provide the new pastor an accessible path toward developing the new parish.

However, the challenge of creating unity in a parish where there are two permanent and separate places of worship will exist. The selection of where the new parish office will be, and where the parish pastor and priests shall reside, will be important decisions, early on. An even distribution of time and resources will be critical in maintaining balance.

In *Scenario 1*, there is a clear path for long-term viability for each of the new

		<p>parishes. Investments into each parish can be financed through the sale of surplus real estate holdings, which will then allow each parish to be financially secure for generations to come. Most importantly, this financial freedom will provide the pastor at either parish with the opportunity to realize their strengthened ministry, expand their outreach, and realize their plans, whatever they may be.</p> <p>Financial security and well-developed plans will only take the new parishes so far. The long-term health, stability, and viability of the new parishes will still inevitably be contingent on parishioner retention, acquisition, and growth.</p>
<p><b>MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario address particular local needs?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Respects particular local vitality and culture</i></li> <li>• <i>Prevents geographical Catholic deserts</i></li> <li>• <i>Accounts for demographic trends such as shifts in population</i></li> </ul>	<p>Scenario One does address shifts in the local demographic. With the proper outreach, Parish One should be able to capitalize on the growing Hispanic community in Portage Park. With the cessation of the Polish mass at St. Pascal, each of the parishes in this scenario will have an opportunity to reconfigure their physical administrative needs, with the possibility that surplus can be sold in the future, should the need arise. Parish One can focus more time and effort on serving the remaining community while growing the developing Hispanic the parishioner base.</p> <p>In turn, because Parish Two will maintain two permanent places of worship, the parish can feasibly continue to maintain and grow the Polish ministry and community that has been developed at St. Constance, while also serving their remaining parishioner base, with St. Robert Bellarmine English speakers.</p> <p>Local culture will need to be addressed on an ongoing basis, but with targeted community outreach and openness to adapt and change based on the parishioner base, a foundation of inclusiveness can be created. Alpha will play a big role in building a new and unified parish culture at both parishes.</p> <p>Thankfully, no parish deserts will be created through this uniting of parishes. With the abundance of Catholic parishes on the Northwest side of Chicago, should a parishioner decide that a different parish better serves their needs, there are many options available. Although switching parishes may not be in the best interest of the Jefferson Park/Portage Park grouping, it still allows for fellow Catholics to continue their faith, which in the end is the more important.</p>
<p><b>PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario fit with the Foundational Principles for Structural Viability?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Minimum of 800 parishioners attending Mass for a full-time resident pastor, based on the number of pastors in the future</i></li> </ul>	<p>With the exception of Our Lady of Victory, the parishes involved all surpass the weekly attendance count of 800 pre-COVID. As it currently stands, Parish One can afford to have a full-time Pastor, with the potential for an Associate Pastor, depending on parishioner retention and/or growth.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Operating revenue: \$750,000+ for basic staffing</i></li> <li>• <i>Can afford facility repairs and maintenance</i></li> </ul>	<p>Parish Two should be able to maintain a Pastor and Associate Pastor from the beginning, based on current mass counts.</p> <p>Each of the parishes in Scenario One should be able to remain operational, based on each of the current parishes existing level of revenue and/or savings. In the future, efforts to expand may need to rely more heavily on real estate sales to fund projects for Parish One. However, Parish Two should have an easier path to financial stability based on the current state of their parishes.</p> <p>Each parish site has its strengths and weaknesses, but are all well maintained, and have churches that have high scores and are in good standing.</p> <p>The Our Lady of Victory church currently operates on the adjoining school power grid. Thankfully, because the site has a lower church, there should be adequate space to build and maintain a mechanical room on the premises, so the site can remain a place of worship if the school building is sold.</p>
<p><b>MANAGEABILITY</b></p>	<p><b><i>Will this scenario be manageable for pastors, clergy, and parish staff?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography: potential travel across sites</i></li> <li>• <i>Administration: Number of buildings</i></li> <li>• <i>Pastoral care: Sacramental coverage</i></li> </ul>	<p>Each of the parishes in the scenario is close to one another, so traveling from site to site should not be an issue in the short term. Each parish will also have the opportunity to reconfigure their physical space to meet their administrative needs, with surplus real estate sold in the future, should the need arise.</p> <p>St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Constance are so close to one another, that traveling between sites can continue to be feasible in a long-term and/or permanent arrangement.</p> <p>The distance between St. Pascal and OLV is a bit further, but travel should be manageable in the short-term, should OLV remain a worship site. In the long-term, the distance between the two parishes is far enough that it may impede the development of a single unified parish community.</p> <p>Pastoral care and Sacramental coverage will be more of an issue for Parish 1 than it is for Parish 2, but that will be determined by the parish growth and the addition of an Associate Pastor.</p>
<p><b>SCHOOL VITALITY &amp; SUSTAINABILITY</b></p>	<p><b><i>How does this scenario support school vitality and sustainability?</i></b> (i.e., potential to reach minimum of 240 students in PK-8 based on local area demographics and parish student population)</p>	<p>There are three schools in this parish grouping, with Pope Francis Global Academy (operating out of St. Pascal), St. Constance, and St. Robert Bellarmine. At this time, Pope Francis Global Academy and St. Robert Bellarmine have the potential to reach a minimum of 240 students as they currently stand.</p> <p>Although St. Constance does not currently have the same number of students as Pope Francis Global Academy and St. Robert Bellarmine, they currently receive</p>



		<p>financial support from the Big Shoulders Fund, which should provide financial stability for the school under the terms of a ten-year agreement.</p> <p>St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory had already undergone a school consolidation five-years before this grouping's activation, to form the current iteration of Pope Francis Global Academy. Through this combination, a legally binding endowment was created that financially links St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory to one another. Any scenario that does not include both St. Pascal and Our Lady of Victory in the same parish, will have to facilitate the dissolution of the Pope Francis Global Academy Endowment.</p>
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**Scenario 2: 2 parishes, 2 churches total**

- **Parish 1: St. Constance and Our Lady of Victory unite & Our Lady of Victory closes**
- **Parish 2: St. Pascal & St. Robert Bellarmine unite & one closes**

<p><b>RENEW CHURCH ASPIRATION</b></p>	<p><b>MY</b></p>	<p><i>How well does this scenario challenge the grouping to move beyond maintaining current structures to invest a higher percentage of time and resources in ministry?</i></p> <p><i>How will this scenario support vitality and stability for the long-term (10+ years), considering demographic and parishioner trends?</i></p>	<p>There is support for this scenario within the discernment group. This scenario would support long term vitality for both new parishes. Unfortunately, this scenario would also require the closing of some campus buildings in both parish 1 (OLV would close) and parish 2 (not definite as to what buildings would close).</p> <p>Scenario 2 - Parish 1:</p> <p>The parish 1 scenario does meet the Renew My Church aspirations.</p> <p>As stated clearly in the above scenario description all comments below are based on a plan that involves the eventual closing of all OLV buildings.</p> <p>There is support for this Parish 1 scenario within the discernment group and with parishioners of both present parishes.</p> <p>There is a shared Catholic identity between St. Constance and OLV. Those OLV parishioners that choose to participate in the St. C parish after a merger would strengthen the combined parish ministries at St. C particularly the English (Anglo) speaking ministries and organizations.</p> <p>St. Constance already has significant weekly attendance (+ 2000) especially in the Polish masses. The combining of OLV with St. Constance would more likely increase attendance in the English masses.</p> <p>St. Constance has a nun order on campus and would be able to utilize that</p>
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		<p>religious order to continue to provide sacramental and ministry coverage to what would be an increased parish territory.</p> <p>The merging of St. Constance and OLV would strengthen the English organizations in St. Constance and make for a more vibrant parish.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Scenario 2 – Parish 2:</p> <p>Scenario two does meet the Renew My Church aspirations but includes the inherent difficulties of choosing which campus buildings to close.</p> <p>The combining of St. Pascal and SRB parishes could lead to loss of parishioners feeling disenfranchised. (It is clear that keeping both churches open would be the most palatable to the parishioners but is not included as an option in this scenario).</p> <p>Some parishioners will certainly embrace the combining of the parishes.</p> <p>The combined parishes would support 10 + years vitality simply by the increase in parishioner population and thus donations and its association with the maintenance of only one campus and one set of buildings.</p> <p>To maintain sacramental and ministry coverage in the enlarged territory a pastor and associate would be required.</p>
<p><b>MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario address particular local needs?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Respects particular local vitality and culture</i></li> <li>• <i>Prevents geographical Catholic deserts</i></li> <li>• <i>Accounts for demographic trends such as shifts in population</i></li> </ul>	<p>Scenario 2 - Parish 1:</p> <p>This merger does not appear to create any “deserts”. Though in truth only some OLV parishioners will likely make the transition to the St. Constance location – some will go to St. Pascals – some will go elsewhere on the NW side of the city.</p> <p>OLV and St. Constance appear to have a common culture around more conservative and traditional Catholicism. OLV and St. Constance appear very well matched in this regard.</p> <p>St. Constance has a significant historical connection to OLV with many of the original St. Constance parishioners coming from the older OLV parish.</p> <p>It is difficult to determine shifts in demographics but by St. Constance gaining the present OLV territory it appears to significantly strengthen the new St. Constance/OLV parish. The long-term viability is significantly enhanced.</p>

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<p><b>PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario fit with the Foundational Principles for Structural Viability?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Minimum of 800 parishioners attending Mass for a full-time resident pastor, based on the number of pastors in the future</i></li> <li>• <i>Operating revenue: \$750,000+ for basic staffing</i></li> <li>• <i>Can afford facility repairs and maintenance</i></li> </ul>	<p>Scenario 2 - Parish 1:</p> <p>OLV on its own does not meet the operating revenue requirement.</p> <p>OLV on its own also does not meet the 800-parishioner threshold and thus uniting with another parish is a necessity.</p> <p>St. Constance significantly exceeds the parishioner attendance threshold on its own (+ 2000 weekly). Uniting would further strengthen St. Constance’s attendance (especially the English masses) and give OLV parishioners a strong home church/parish. This makes this scenario favored by some St. Constance parishioners especially English Mass attending parishioners.</p> <p>St. Constance combining with OLV (a OLV that eventually closes all its buildings) would lead to a stronger and more stable single parish and resultant territory.</p> <p>Financials would also be bolstered significantly through the selling of the OLV buildings assuming the proceeds remain with the new combined parish.</p>

		<p>St. Constance cannot afford maintaining any OLV buildings and this scenario does not consider such a complex and expensive undertaking.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Scenario 2 – Parish 2:</p> <p>Both parishes are meeting the 800-parishioner threshold independently. This may not be the case in 7 to 10 years. Combining the parish populations would make a stronger parish from a total parishioner population standpoint.</p> <p>Operating revenue is approximately \$750,000 for both parishes independently. Merging the two parishes would result in a significantly bolstered operating revenue.</p> <p>Both parish campuses appear to be in relatively good condition including their church and school buildings. The St. Pascal rectory appears in a more user ready condition than the SRB rectory. Though both churches are in very good condition the SRB church building appears particularly new and is of more recent construction.</p> <p>The SRB Church is presently handicap accessible.</p> <p>In summary, combining the parishes would result in a much-strengthened financial situation. Though there will likely be some loss of parishioners from the church that would be designated for closure (assuming a church would be closed).</p>
<p><b>MANAGEABILITY</b></p>	<p><b><i>Will this scenario be manageable for pastors, clergy, and parish staff?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Geography: potential travel across sites</i></li> <li>● <i>Administration: Number of buildings</i></li> <li>● <i>Pastoral care: Sacramental coverage</i></li> </ul>	<p>Scenario 2 - Parish 1:</p> <p>OLV and St. Constance are 1.2 miles apart. This distance is not a challenge for car driving parishioners but perhaps too great a distance for parishioners to routinely traverse by foot.</p> <p>Administration and buildings are not a major challenge. OLV buildings would close and St. Constance is presently blessed with a well-maintained rectory, hall, gym, convent, church and school.</p> <p>Sacramental coverage would require a pastor and one associate priest (which has been the typical St. Constance situation anyway).</p> <p>Saint Constance is also associated with a nun's order who presently live in the convent. The nuns presently support sacramental coverage and it is assumed this would continue into the future in the new and enlarged parish territory.</p>

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<p><b>SCHOOL VITALITY &amp; SUSTAINABILITY</b></p>	<p><b><i>How does this scenario support school vitality and sustainability?</i></b> (i.e., potential to reach minimum of 240 students in PK-8 based on local area demographics and parish student population)</p>	<p>Scenario 2 – Parish 1:</p> <p>OLV does not have an operating school. St. Constance does have an operating school (about 135 students). The St. Constance school building is in relatively good condition. The St. Constance school is a Big Shoulder’s school and thus receives No financial support from the archdiocese. The St. Constance school has a 10-year commitment from the Big Shoulders program.</p> <p>The general belief is the St. Constance enrollment will increase albeit moderately after the merging with OLV parish. It is believed that most or All previous OLV students would stay at their present school but the lower grades at St. Constance would pick up additional students from the OLV parish and territory.</p> <p>Again the St. Constance school would likely show an increase in enrollment after a merger but it is unlikely that the school would reach a 240-student enrollment. Its operation would continue to be tied to the big shoulders program. (Presently a 10-year commitment exists with the Big Shoulders program).</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Scenario 2 – Parish 2:</p> <p>Both schools are presently viable with approximately 230 students at St. Pascal (PFGA) and 280 students at SRB. This appears to be a situation where,</p>

		<p>unfortunately, a relatively strong school would be closed.</p> <p>There is a general feeling in the discernment group though not unanimous that operating both schools is feasible. Though funding for the two schools would potentially become problematic in the foreseeable future and would need to be analyzed closely. SRB and PFGA could be able to maintain current structures based on potential financial feasibility.</p>
<p><b>Scenario 3: 2 parishes, 3 churches total</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Parish 1: St Constance, Our Lady of Victory, and St. Robert Bellarmine unite and one church closes</b></li> <li>● <b>Parish 2: St. Pascal remains its own parish--not viable on its own</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION</b></p>	<p><i>How well does this scenario challenge the grouping to move beyond maintaining current structures to invest a higher percentage of time and resources in ministry?</i></p> <p><i>How will this scenario support vitality and stability for the long-term (10+ years), considering demographic and parishioner trends?</i></p>	<p>Although there is some support for this scenario within the discernment group, this does not align to Renew My Church aspiration for the full grouping. This scenario would provide long term vitality and stability for Parish 1, but coupled with the movement of the St. Pascal Polish mass into the existing Polish Ministry at St Constance this scenario will result in a further parishioner and priest decrease for St. Pascal.</p> <p>For Parish 1 bringing both communities and finances together will strengthen the ability to invest additional resources in ministry</p>
<p><b>MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS</b></p>	<p><i>How well does this scenario address particular local needs?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Respects particular local vitality and culture</i></li> <li>● <i>Prevents geographical Catholic deserts</i></li> <li>● <i>Accounts for demographic trends such as shifts in population</i></li> </ul>	<p>This scenario prevents geographical Catholic deserts, as the grouping itself is a demonstration of too many current parishes in close proximity to support the current parishioner needs. The combining of St Constance, Our Lady of Victory, and St Robert Bellarmine will pull together the communities north of St Pascal, providing for more opportunity to new parishioners in the southern area of the grouping to seek out St Pascal.</p>
<p><b>PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES</b></p>	<p><i>How well does this scenario fit with the Foundational Principles for Structural Viability?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Minimum of 800 parishioners attending Mass for a full-time resident pastor, based on the number of pastors in the future</i></li> <li>● <i>Operating revenue: \$750,000+ for basic staffing</i></li> <li>● <i>Can afford facility repairs and maintenance</i></li> </ul>	<p>The unified parish of St. Constance, Our Lady of Victory, and St. Robert Bellarmine will certainly fit with the Foundational Principles for Structural Viability. Both Mass attendance and Operating revenue will be some combination of current numbers, so will put the unified Parish in a more positive position to prepare for the Spiritual Renewal portion of Renew my Church.</p> <p>Leaving St. Pascal as a standalone parish, coupled with the move of the Polish Mass into the Polish Ministry of St. Constance will not meet the mass attendance requirement (assuming 50% or more of the polish attendance leaves), it will also</p>

		not meet the Operating revenue goal.
<b>MANAGEABILITY</b>	<p><b>Will this scenario be manageable for pastors, clergy, and parish staff?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography: potential travel across sites</i></li> <li>• <i>Administration: Number of buildings</i></li> <li>• <i>Pastoral care: Sacramental coverage</i></li> </ul>	<p>For the unified parish of St. Constance, Our Lady of Victory, and St. Robert Bellarmine there will be 2 churches and 2 schools, if Our Lady of Victory closes the proximity of St Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine structures will be manageable for pastors, clergy, and parish staff. Recommendation is for the rectory at St. Constance to be used for the unified parish, due to office and living space available.</p> <p>With St. Pascal remaining as is, there will not be a need to account for travel between sites.</p>
<b>SCHOOL VITALITY &amp; SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<p><b>How does this scenario support school vitality and sustainability?</b> (i.e., potential to reach minimum of 240 students in PK-8 based on local area demographics and parish student population)</p>	<p>Parish 1 will result in two schools, although each school would have a church co-located, so although there will be some stress between the needs of both this does align to our guiding principle.</p> <p>St. Pascal will continue to have Pope Francis Global Academy operate on its campus, so continues on its path to viability.</p>

**Scenario 4: 2 parishes, 3 churches**

- **Parish 1: St. Constance remains its own parish--viable on its own with Polish esp. with funded school (that we can't touch anyway)**
- **Parish 2: Our Lady of Victory, St. Pascal and St. Robert Bellarmine unite & one closes**

<b>RENEW CHURCH ASPIRATION MY</b>	<p><b>How well does this scenario challenge the grouping to move beyond maintaining current structures to invest a higher percentage of time and resources in ministry?</b></p> <p><b>How will this scenario support vitality and stability for the long-term (10+ years), considering demographic and parishioner trends?</b></p>	<p>St. Constance is functioning well currently as an independent parish, with a sizable weekly Mass attendance and strong donor base, particularly from the Polish community. The data indicates that this should continue. The long-term success of St. Constance as an independent parish will depend on its ability to effectively evangelize and recruit younger parishioners, including young families. Parish 2's success in this scenario depends largely on appropriate staffing to manage day-to-day business, pastoral, sacramental operations in addition to accomplishing evangelical (and parish growth) goals.</p> <p>As was voiced by a notable number of parishioners during RMC parish update meetings at OLV, there are deep trust issues between the Northwest side community and the Archdiocese, due to the perceived mishandling of school closures in recent years. It will be important to keep this in mind as the RMC process continues, in particular if a church is deemed for closure.</p> <p>Some members of the GFDT voiced concern about the aging of the Polish population and how lack of effective evangelizing to younger parishioners in the Polish-speaking and English-speaking communities could be detrimental to the</p>
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		<p>long-term health of the parish. It may be beneficial to “increase” territory to add additional ministry.</p>
<p><b>MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario address particular local needs?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Respects particular local vitality and culture</i></li> <li>● <i>Prevents geographical Catholic deserts</i></li> <li>● <i>Accounts for demographic trends such as shifts in population</i></li> </ul>	<p>While this scenario addresses structural concerns more directly, it raises important concerns for consideration, specifically for Parish 2. Parish 2 is to combine 3 existing churches, of which one would be deemed for closure. Currently, OLV offers a presence that is an average of 1.5 miles East of the other three churches in this grouping. If OLV closes, many current routine Mass attendees who rely on being able to walk to Mass would lose their ability to visit their parish home independently. They could potentially become “lost sheep” without means to continue attending Mass or other sacramental services.</p> <p>Consolidation of ministries from the three parishes have the potential to improve evangelization potential. Larger women's groups, men's groups, Ministers of Care, young family, youth ministry etc. might contribute more to parish vitality with more volunteers contributing time, talent and treasure.</p> <p>It is also important to keep in mind that this assumes that 1) current parishioners of the cluster will largely remain in the cluster and 2) that the newly formed parish 2 will be successful in recruiting new members from the neighborhood community.</p> <p>Assuming that Parish 2 will keep at least one of the older, historical church properties running, Parish 2 would be able to offer liturgies that appeal to both traditional and modern styles of worship.</p>
<p><b>PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario fit with the Foundational Principles for Structural Viability?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Minimum of 800 parishioners attending Mass for a full-time resident pastor, based on the number of pastors in the future</i></li> <li>● <i>Operating revenue: \$750,000+ for basic staffing</i></li> <li>● <i>Can afford facility repairs and maintenance</i></li> </ul>	<p>OLV’s most recent October count shows that Mass attendance is well below the 800-person threshold, and eliminating the Polish Mass at St. Pascal will reduce that parish’s most recent October count well below the same threshold. In theory, closing one of the churches in order to reduce property liability and expenses and condense/centralize the parishioner base is in line with financial viability.</p> <p>“Parish 2” in this scenario makes logical sense, but successfully maintaining a viable parishioner base depends on both 1) current parishioners remaining within the parish grouping after structural changes are implemented and 2) a successful establishment of ministries and strong evangelization efforts in the newly formed Parish 2. Since the specific strategy for ministry formation and evangelization has yet to be discussed and established, it is not possible to accurately evaluate the potential for success of this arrangement.</p> <p>Father Michael has been actively soliciting financial assessments of structures on OLV’s campus to determine whether any can be sold or leased (e.g., century</p>



		leases) in order to reduce financial liability, which may allow Parish 2 to consider maintaining OLV as a supplemental worship site for Parish and community use in the short or long term. Specific options currently in exploration include the viability of repurposing the school building as a residential community, and ongoing conversations indicate strong potential for success in marketing the property as such. Additionally, it should be noted that OLV's financial position will be impacted in the imminent future by the receipt of a recently deceased person's estate, a portion of which was willed to OLV.
<b>MANAGEABILITY</b>	<p><b><i>Will this scenario be manageable for pastors, clergy, and parish staff?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography: potential travel across sites</i></li> <li>• <i>Administration: Number of buildings</i></li> <li>• <i>Pastoral care: Sacramental coverage</i></li> </ul>	The three churches in Parish 2 are geographically close together, making travel between them feasible for any pastors, clergy, and lay people on staff. Whether one or two pastors can feasibly provide sufficient coverage of pastoral needs depends on how many school sites remain active post-merger, how many active parishioners belong to each community, etc.
<b>SCHOOL VITALITY &amp; SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<p><b><i>How does this scenario support school vitality and sustainability? (i.e., potential to reach minimum of 240 students in PK-8 based on local area demographics and parish student population)</i></b></p>	<p>Where a Catholic school is operational, it stands to reason that a church also needs to be open and accessible on site for school Masses, sacramental activities, prayer, and other educational purposes in line with the curriculum. If the goal of the school is to attract new students and families, a building with the most amenities and space to allow for growth should be selected.</p> <p>Parish 1 – St. Constance remains open. The school at St. Constance currently has significantly fewer students than the minimum goal of 240, but funding for the school is currently coming from an external source that allows the school to remain operational.</p> <p>Parish 2 - Both the existing St. Robert Bellarmine and Pope Francis Global Academy schools would remain open and associated with Parish 2, however there is likely to be added stress having two schools associated with a single parish. Appropriate staffing would be needed in order to ensure effective management.</p>
<p><b>Scenario 5: All four parishes unite as 1 new parish with 2 or 3 churches remaining open and one closing</b></p>		
<b>RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION</b>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario challenge the grouping to move beyond maintaining current structures to invest a higher percentage of time and resources in ministry?</i></b></p> <p><b><i>How will this scenario support vitality and stability for the long-term (10+ years), considering demographic and parishioner trends?</i></b></p>	<p>This scenario directly challenges the grouping to move beyond expected renewal structures and consider a new approach to organization. It asks the parishes of Portage Park &amp; Jefferson Park to come together to address shared outreach opportunities in the community. Most radical scenario that could create new visioning true to the spirit of RMC.</p> <p>In addressing a renewal scenario vs. a modification scenario, the parishes &amp; parishioners resolve to commit to a long-term solution that expects shared sacrifice and will support the geographic community for the long term.</p>
<b>MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS</b>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario address particular local needs?</i></b></p>	<p>The JP/PP neighborhoods have distinctive Polish-speaking &amp; English-speaking communities. Language differences encourage cultural barriers and organizing</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Respects particular local vitality and culture</i></li> <li>• <i>Prevents geographical Catholic deserts</i></li> <li>• <i>Accounts for demographic trends such as shifts in population</i></li> </ul>	<p>parishes based on language differences reinforces this separation. Bringing all the parishes in the area together into one parish eliminates the opportunity for parish communities to separate themselves from the larger community. One parish containing two growing Chicago neighborhoods supports the flexibility needed for meeting growth in some areas of the parish and contraction in other areas.</p>
<p><b>PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES</b></p>	<p><b><i>How well does this scenario fit with the Foundational Principles for Structural Viability?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Minimum of 800 parishioners attending Mass for a full-time resident pastor, based on the number of pastors in the future</i></li> <li>• <i>Operating revenue: \$750,000+ for basic staffing</i></li> <li>• <i>Can afford facility repairs and maintenance</i></li> </ul>	<p>Clearly, the resources of four parishes combined into one meet the minimum expectations of parishioners and revenue. Some facilities would close and some could be repurposed or refocused based on parish needs. For example, certain buildings might be reserved as a worship site to host events such as weddings and funerals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OLV remaining as a worship site for events</li> <li>• Repurposing/expansion of OLV grotto (unique feature in the area) as a venue for weddings only.</li> <li>• Revitalizing the SRB convent as a food pantry.</li> </ul> <p>Some buildings cannot be repurposed and should be sold, and the revenue of these sales would replenish the resources of the parish and allow those churches that meet the needs of the parish (geography &amp; capacity) to be repaired &amp; upgraded.</p>
<p><b>MANAGEABILITY</b></p>	<p><b><i>Will this scenario be manageable for pastors, clergy, and parish staff?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography: potential travel across sites</i></li> <li>• <i>Administration: Number of buildings</i></li> <li>• <i>Pastoral care: Sacramental coverage</i></li> </ul>	<p>The reorganization clergy and staff is the greatest challenge to this scenario. But in all reorganization scenarios, change in current practice and people's habits and expectations will be the most difficult hurdle to clear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography: the parish is large but the territory is geographically manageable with each church being within 15 minutes driving distance from one another.</i></li> <li>• <i>Administration: the number of buildings in use in the parish and their purposes would need to be realigned with the shared values, goals, and evangelism of the new parish.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pastoral care: multiple associate pastors and FT and PT staff would be needed to support not only the infrastructure of a large parish but also the evangelical and social justice goals. These roles would require both professional pastoral and lay support.</i></li> </ul> <p>This scenario poses the greatest challenges to manageability as it expects the broadest changes to current practice and focuses the duties of an almost 3,000-member parish onto one pastor and team. Implementing this scenario will take no small measure of vision and creativity.</p>
<p><b>SCHOOL VITALITY &amp; SUSTAINABILITY</b></p>	<p><b><i>How does this scenario support school vitality and sustainability?</i></b> (i.e., potential to reach minimum of 240 students in PK-8 based on local area demographics and parish student population)</p>	<p>The four parishes currently contain three schools; maintaining three separate schools is not viable as no one school is self-sufficient and all have room within their physical buildings to grow. The school populations would need to be combined into one or two schools with two locations within the parish.</p> <p>Recognizing that the agreement with Big Shoulders prohibits alteration to St.</p>



Constance, SRB and PFGA would need to be combined into one campus, allowing school families to select a school that is the best geographic as well as academic fit.