



February 12, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St. Constance and St. Robert Bellarmine,

First, please know of our prayers for you and your parishioners as we continue in the early days of the new calendar year and soon enter our shared Lenten journey.

We write to you in regard to concerns that have arisen following publication of the formal decree. As the decree noted, parishioners can write to Cardinal Cupich to ask him to reconsider or amend the decree. We are aware of many letters concerned about designation of the parish church. Please understand we have reviewed these concerns with Cardinal Cupich and will also review the concerns with the Presbyteral Council at its next meeting in early March.

Below we also wish to clarify important elements to understand about the future direction of your parishes uniting as one new parish.

It is important to know both St. Constance Church and St. Robert Bellarmine Church will be vital churches for worship within a united parish. There are no considerations to close either church in the future. They are both needed to support vital ministry under a united parish.

Rome requires that a united parish's sacramental records be kept in one place and for that location to be designated in the decree as the parish church. Either St. Constance campus or St. Robert Bellarmine campus could serve equally well as the parish church for purposes of maintaining the sacramental records. The decree named St. Robert Bellarmine as the parish church. We have asked Cardinal Cupich, and he has agreed, to re-consult the Presbyteral Council to consider changing the parish church designation at the Council's early March meeting. We will provide an update shortly after the Council meeting.

To be clear, the parish church designation does not affect how the churches will be used day to day, the Mass schedule the united parish will set, nor the office hours at each location. Those are all decisions the future pastor will make and will not be affected by which location is designated the parish church.

Additionally, please know the archdiocese's Priests' Placement Board is reviewing pastor candidates who can effectively support vibrancy in both Polish and English for the united parish to evangelize the neighborhood and continue the strength of Polish ministry where St. Constance has been and will continue to be an important center for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

We have great hope for your parishes uniting as a new parish. You remain in our prayers. Please keep us in yours.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Handwritten signature of John R. Manz in black ink.

Most Reverend John Manz
Episcopal Vicar, Vicariate IV

Handwritten signature of Rev. Jason Malave in black ink.

Rev. Jason Malave
Cardinal's Liaison for Renew My Church