

“RENEW MY CHURCH” ARCHDIOCESAN INITIATIVE

Update – Bulletin October 16, 2016

STATEMENT FROM ARCHBISHOP CUPICH AND MEETING WITH PRIESTS

GROUPING OF PARISHES

As you may know, a year ago, Archbishop Cupich in a meeting with priests reflected upon the mission of the church especially in our Archdiocese of Chicago. He reflected the call of St. Francis of Assisi by Christ to “Rebuild My Church.” He used the image of the San Damiano Cross, Christ called Francis, “go rebuild my church.” Francis came to understand Christ was calling him to Renew My Church, not just rebuild a structure. That is the task before us. Pope Francis has called us to dream big for the Church. He said: “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.”

Archbishop Cupich is calling us to renew the Church in Chicago. He said: “I am inviting everyone in the Archdiocese of Chicago to join me in a multi-year planning process to ensure the sustainable growth of our Church for the future. Just as our ancestors responded in faith to their dreams and built the church we have today, it is our time to dream big and to take up this work. The Archdiocese has changed in significant ways over the past several decades. Yes we know that demographics have shifted dramatically, some buildings are in disrepair, and we have fewer priests to pastor. Yet, at the same time, there is new life as immigrants continue to make Chicagoland their home, as we ordain enthusiastic and energetic new priests and as we live in the historic time when Pope Francis is leading us to live in the joy of the Gospel. Thus, we should not be afraid to face our challenges, but embrace them, seeing this moment as a graces opportunity to chart new ways to live out our mission more fully.”

Archbishop Cupich calls us to participate fully in this process to help our church and the whole Archdiocese to be more vibrant and strong. The purpose of Renew My Church is to “foster mission vitality and inspire discipleship. Renew My Church will ensure all communities are served by a vibrant, vital and life-giving Church; that pastoral leaders have the resources they need to carry out our mission; and that we inspire disciples to accompany all members of our family of faith to a deeper, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Last Tuesday, all the priests of the Archdiocese gathered again with Archbishop Cupich to discuss the process of *Renew My Church* in the whole Archdiocese and every parish will be affected. The first process is to form groupings which is to have 3, 4 parishes group together in order to share resources and to have the capacity to be vital, vibrant for a truly life-giving, disciple-making, and sustainable Catholic presence for years to come. Each grouping will be charged with planning for the best way to achieve that vision in their local areas. In some areas, this may require new configurations such as multi-site parishes or multi-parish pastoring. In all areas, groupings will be called to greater collaboration and interdependence among one another. After meeting with the all the pastors in our deanery and Bishop Manz, our Episcopal Vicar, they decided to propose grouping for our parish St. Celestine together with St. Cyprian and St. William. As you might know, we have been working together with these two parishes for many years such as sharing our Lenten Mission, “Hot Topic” presentations every month as well as joining RCIA together this year. I think we will continue to help one another to be more vibrant and strong.

In Prayer,

Fr. Paul Cao, Saint Celestine Pastor