



## **Community Discernment and Planning Feedback Summary Rogers Park-Edgewater Grouping of St. Jerome, St. Ignatius, and St. Gertrude**

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

**November 20, 2020**

Dear Commission Members,

The pastoral leaders in the Rogers Park-Edgewater Grouping are grateful for the opportunity to submit this feedback to you toward the renewal of Jesus' mission in our local church. This summary represents the fruit of our conversations and discernment over the past four months as individual parishes and collectively as a grouping. Unfortunately, probably like several other groupings, we underwent this process during the pandemic, which placed significant limitations on our ability to engage in a more robust, communal discernment. We are grateful for your prayerful consideration of this feedback as you discern a recommendation for the Episcopal Vicar and Cardinal Cupich. We look forward to receiving the decision of Cardinal Cupich and the archdiocese.

### **OVERALL FEEDBACK SUMMARY**

The Renew My Church grouping of St. Jerome, St. Ignatius, and St. Gertrude parishes, along with representatives of Loyola University and the Jesuit community, met virtually starting in the summer of 2020 and plans to conclude its work in November 2020. This document serves as a brief explanation of the feedback being provided to the archdiocese. The grouping considered six initial scenarios developed by the pastors and RMC staff and added four alternative scenarios.

The working group was shepherded by Tom Lenz and followed the stipulations laid out in the documents for providing feedback for Renew My Church. Consequently, we can report that the following scenarios received the most support as being viable administratively, financially, and in terms of ministry to the Rogers Park/Edgewater neighborhoods:

- **Scenarios 4 and 6 are the most viable; scenario 8 is viable, but it closes St. Ignatius canonically before any decision can be finalized on a potential St. Ignatius Mission Center.**

- While **scenario 5 respects local culture/preferences** with respect to worship sites, it is the **closest to the current status quo** and thus does not realize many benefits to consolidation.
- **Scenario 7 is the most aspirational and visionary**, and the archdiocesan analysis identified its adherence to attendance numbers and finances. Our grouping team **considered it among the less viable scenarios** and felt that closing St. Jerome and St. Gertrude would require creative, intentional, and trilingual pastoral leadership. Relocating Northside Catholic Academy also raised some concerns.
- **Scenarios 2, 3, 9 and 10 were deemed neither viable nor visionary** for the future of the Catholic Church in our geographic area. We also considered **scenario 1 to be among the less viable scenarios**.

The working group did its best to prayerfully consider the good of the whole and not just each member's parish community. There was a recognition that there is diversity among the three parishes, and a desire to see that diversity tended to and cared for. This was also true for the diversity of ministries provided at all three current parishes. We broadly agreed that, regardless of the final parish arrangements, a shared business and facilities management team could be beneficial for the parishes.

We have organized our scenario feedback appendix in two sections. The first is a more full-depth analysis of scenarios which our discernment teams thought the most viable. The second section analyzes other scenarios which we considered less viable, ranked roughly in descending order by how well they did in a straw poll of our grouping team.

## **ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK AND IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Northside Catholic Academy**

The degree to which Northside Catholic Academy would be part of the grouping's deliberations was a source of some confusion from the beginning. During our discernment, the integral role of NCA in connection with our churches and the future of Catholic evangelization in the area made it clear to us that it was vital that NCA's role be considered. The grouping did have a chance to talk with the principal and board chair of NCA at an October meeting and feedback from that session is included. NCA leadership voiced concern that scenarios that envision St. Gertrude merging with another parish and closing as a worship site could negatively affect its ability to operate. St. Gertrude provides most students in the school and is critical to its mission of faith formation. NCA is also concerned that relocating the school to the St. Ignatius campus would be extremely expensive with the needed capital costs potentially more than \$1 million. NCA leadership believes the only way they could move would be with significant capital support from the archdiocese—or, we believe, it could be financed through the sale of properties from the three parishes.

Grouping Team members urged NCA to redouble the school's recruitment efforts to build the diversity of the school to more closely approximate the neighborhood. Currently 80% of NCA students are St. Gertrude parishioners. We believe efforts must be made to attract students from St. Jerome and other parishes to NCA, which is a regional school. One option would be to use some funds raised from selling surplus parish property for NCA scholarships. Whichever parish configuration is determined, the

grouping feels NCA should build stronger relationships with the parishes in the region and work to make it easier for school parents to join their geographic parishes rather than just St. Gertrude.

### **Feedback on a possible St. Ignatius Mission/Ministry Center**

Over the course of the Rogers Park – Edgewater Grouping’s discernment and decisions process, we have discussed the possibility of the grouping’s parishes partnering with Loyola University Chicago and the local Jesuit community in the development of a Mission/Ministry Center. A likely location would be on the St. Ignatius parish campus. Given the potential of this new mission, we desire to explore and develop a proposal over the next year to 18 months. This exploration could include:

- Identifying ministries/services for the mission’s programming among the parishes, Loyola University Chicago, the local Jesuit community and other possible parties/organizations;
- Determining what space would be needed at St. Ignatius and/or at the other parishes to house the mission programs;
- Framing organizational structure options for the mission;
- And shaping a sustainable financing plan for the mission.

Prior to the pandemic’s detrimental economic consequences for Loyola, the university was interested in possibly purchasing the site where St. Ignatius grade school now sits to construct an apartment-style residence hall for juniors and seniors. Ideally, in that possible building would have been space for the Schools of Social Work, Nursing, Arts and Sciences, and Education to interact with parishioners and neighbors. However, the university predicts that it will be at least two or three years before it would have the financial resources to pursue further development of this idea.

The parishioners and leaders of St. Ignatius feel that purchase and development of the school buildings by Loyola would have been a financially sound way to move ahead with a mission center. However, they also feel that, despite the financial position Loyola is in, the mission center idea still holds promise. If the Rogers Park-Edgewater parishes are able to move forward with beginning partnership with Loyola’s interested departments and interested outside donors in funding some concrete examples of spiritual formation and social service in the community, a good start could be made on a cooperative arrangement between the parishes and Loyola before the university could move forward with the original idea.

### **Inclusion in the Grouping and the Catholic Church**

In the spirit of the worldwide Renew My Church endeavor, we recommend that the Roman Catholic Church stand for full inclusion and equality in the Church for women, for the LGBTQ+ community, and respect for lay leadership. These actions will help bring about a renewed vitality needed across the world for a faith based on Christ’s teachings of welcoming everyone. These efforts should also be mindful of those who have experienced a crisis of faith or have disengaged from spiritual life.

### **Responding to Neighborhood Changes**

Of all the challenges facing the Rogers Park – Edgewater Grouping, the most crucial for our future, while simultaneously possibly our most unknowable, is what our communities will look like in the decades to come. Our neighborhoods long have been destinations for immigrants, and Spanish speaking parishioners form the bulwark that has kept St. Jerome and St. Ignatius strong. Meanwhile, many of our

opportunities for evangelization and service come from our ability to provide a welcoming home for immigrant communities and for those who lack worldly resources.

But all neighborhoods change. Recent development in our neighborhoods points to the danger that the future will see a real loss of their multicultural flavor and economic diversity. Declines in membership at St. Jerome's and the loss of affordable housing particularly show some changes already are underway. Indicators include a drop in Rogers Park from 27.8 percent Hispanic residents in 2000 to 20.6 percent in 2018 and an average rental price increase of 20 percent in the 60626 ZIP Code between September 2015 and September 2020. Edgewater has seen a decline from 19.6 percent Hispanic population in 2000 to 15.4 percent in 2018 (although the 2018 number represents a slight rebound from 2010), with a nearly 24 % increase in average rental prices from 2015 to 2020 in the 60660 ZIP Code.

As a united community, we could better respond to these changes, whether through more united advocacy for those less well-off financially, strengthened devotional societies or more vibrant Eucharistic celebrations. As we confront these changes, it would be appropriate and even necessary for our churches to offer food assistance, rental aid and even housing, such as by using surplus parish buildings for affordable housing, which has been done in other parts of Chicago. Studies project increases in the Catholic population of the country, especially among Latinos, Southeast Asians and Africans, and all of these ethnic groups already are represented in the grouping, which could bode well for an increased rather than decreased Catholic population here. While the documentation given us by the Archdiocese predicts increases in Latino populations, we are concerned that without more action on our part on behalf of those who have made our parishes vibrant in recent decades, our grouping will lose much of its vibrancy in the future.

### **Projections in scenarios regarding attendance and financial support**

We understand that the cardinal uses projections of attendance and financial support to inform his decisions. In the initial drafting of the scenarios, there were several options retaining St. Jerome and St. Gertrude, and assigning all members of St. Ignatius to one or the other of these parishes. The analyses also added St. Ignatius parishioners' contributions into the new parishes' funds in the same way. We feel that it is unlikely that St. Ignatius parishioners would all move without question to whichever parish they were assigned by canonically set geographic boundaries. Respecting local geographic, historic, ethnic, and language preferences, we recommend that any projections assume approximately 2/3 go to St. Jerome and 1/3 to St. Gertrude. Although this too is an estimate, we believe it more accurately reflects what we feel would be the resulting parish makeups.

### **CONCLUSION**

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit this feedback to you. The pastors and pastoral leaders, parish delegates, and the hundreds of parishioners who participated in this process look forward to your feedback and response. We would like to continue and expand our collaborative ministry together. We are excited to continue inspiring disciples to accompany all members of our family of faith to a deeper, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Thank you for your prayerful reflection and consideration of this feedback regarding our future.

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

**St. Gertrude**

Rev. Richard J. Prendergast  
Denise Goodman\*  
Lisa Erceg  
Tim Harrington  
Mark Huffman  
Kim McInerney  
Rob Sierzega

**St. Ignatius**

Deacon Chris Murphy  
Rev. Dan Harnett, SJ  
Henry Carmona  
Liam Ford\*  
Leslie Soto  
Jeanne Wrenn  
Dana McDermott

**St. Jerome**

Rev. Noel B. Reyes  
Rev. Joel Ricafranca, RCJ  
Marieth Quintero  
Alma Lopez  
David Kajah  
Salvador Perez\*  
Kathleen Gricius

**Loyola University Chicago**

Rev. James Prehn, SJ\*

\* *Writing team members.*

**APPENDIX: COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL SCENARIOS**

Two-parish scenarios seemed more manageable and viable to our team than one-parish scenarios even while moving us forward from the current structures, but the puzzle of trying to bring together the disparate parts of our Catholic community still seemed difficult to solve.

**MORE VIABLE SCENARIOS****Two parish scenarios that close St. Ignatius and assign it to one or the other of the remaining parishes.**Scenario 4

- Parish 1: St. Ignatius and St. Jerome become one parish. St. Jerome is designated the parish church where the sacramental records are kept for the parish. St. Ignatius ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass.
- Parish 2: St. Gertrude Parish remains in its current canonical parish structure.

Scenario 6

- Parish 1: St. Gertrude and St. Ignatius become one parish. St. Gertrude is designated the parish church where the sacramental records are kept for the parish. St. Ignatius ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass. This parish union could take the form of either: St. Gertrude and St. Ignatius form a new (and newly named) parish OR St. Ignatius Parish becomes part of St. Gertrude Parish.
- Parish 2: St. Jerome Parish remains in its current canonical parish structure.

Alternative Scenario 8

- St. Jerome and St. Gertrude remain in their current canonical parish structures.
- St. Ignatius ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and moves toward formal closure.

**RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION**

These scenarios meet the aspirations of Renew My Church by uniting two parishes to form one larger community under a single pastor. It should not be assumed, however, that all St. Ignatius parishioners would join St. Jerome parish or St. Gertrude parish, as predicted in archdiocesan analysis. It is more likely they will select a parish home based on a variety of personal factors.

There is potential for unity in these scenarios, because of the combination of congregations, but also a danger of further splitting the English- and Spanish-speaking communities. Combining two parishes with large Latino populations could make the Spanish-speaking community stronger. If St. Ignatius were to become part of St. Gertrude, the unification would be most likely to succeed under creative, intentional, and trilingual pastoral leadership.

A drawback to these scenarios is they leave in place two separate parishes (St. Gertrude and St. Jerome) and go against the vision of working together for the mission of the grouping as a whole and the enhanced financial sustainability of a single parish. Even so, cost savings could occur if the parishes were to share a business manager and facilities staff. We feel that if care is taken to integrate former Ignatius parishioners into the two receiving parishes, the two surviving parishes could be made stronger.

#### MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS

The scenarios do satisfy the aspiration of respecting local vitality and culture because St. Jerome would be able to remain as a solid fixture in the Far Northeast part of the city. This preserves the availability of Spanish, bilingual, and English Masses according to parishioner preference.

Northside Catholic Academy would not have to move in these scenarios and St. Jerome's is likely to benefit from an influx of parishioners from St. Ignatius.

These scenarios also would require a mindfulness about the Ignatian Services food pantry's presence as a ministry to the whole community; it could be preserved at St. Jerome. Or it could be part of the Mission Center, if that comes to fruition (an option in 4 and 6). In addition, we feel ministries dealing with hunger at all three current parishes could benefit from working together.

Since these scenarios envision the closing of St. Ignatius as a regular worship site, unless the church remains open as part of the Mission Center, there would need to be a process for thoughtfully and respectfully relocating the shrines at that church: Our Lady of the Clouds (Ecuadoran), Our Lord of the Miracles (Peruvian), and Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexican). There could also be potential capacity issues at St. Jerome for certain liturgical celebrations (such as Triduum). And there could be, as in all scenarios involving closing a church, transportation questions for some parishioners, especially those who are older or poorer. Vans or minibuses could be used to help bridge that gap.

While these scenarios could be viewed as priming for division, forces beyond the control of our parishioners or the church may also influence how the Rogers Park - Edgewater communities interact. It is also fair to respect the natural inclinations of community identity and not force collaboration that wouldn't have arisen spontaneously. Some of our team members are concerned these scenarios will have a workable lifespan of about a decade.

Finally, we recommend that the new parish resulting from any mergers consider adopting a new name.

#### PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

As stated above, we feel it unlikely that all St. Ignatius parishioners will automatically join one parish or another (as assumed in 4 and 6). But if a sizable number do, both the October Count and operating revenue benchmarks at St. Jerome should be met. St. Gertrude would also likely meet the structural principles under this scenario. (This presumes that the impacts of COVID-19 do not permanently affect attendance at archdiocesan churches.)

St. Jerome likely could stand on its own, because many Spanish-speaking St. Ignatius parishioners would likely join St. Jerome, even if St. Ignatius formally were to merge with St. Gertrude. There is also evidence that, prior to the pandemic, St. Jerome's had been able to increase its weekly collections, and St. Jerome's appears already to be showing strength in its restored Sunday worship.

Capital costs are another matter, and the quick repurposing, sale or lease of surplus buildings on current parishes' sites may be needed to provide funds for required upkeep of the new parish arrangements.

## MANAGEABILITY

These scenarios envision having two pastors and pastoral teams, which does ease the manageability of ministering to the grouping. We do believe a shared business/facility operations support staff could help with effective management of the parishes.

In Scenario 6, we feel that if St. Ignatius is consolidated with St. Gertrude, some of the resources from a possible lease or sale of St. Ignatius property should still be shared with St. Jerome.

Again, we are skeptical that these scenarios would result in an even distribution of parishioners to St. Jerome and St. Ignatius, as implied by analysis from archdiocesan staff. Although it's possible that scenario 6, for example, would still more evenly distribute "the number of parishioners in the 2 resulting parishes compared to Scenarios 4 and 5," as noted in the analysis, the more likely result would still be a larger group of parishioners migrating to St. Jerome. This would provide St. Jerome's with the opportunity, but also the responsibility, of taking on additional parishioners. But this scenario's success would be predicated on having creative, intentional, and trilingual pastoral leadership. Jesuit priests and brothers from Loyola University also could assist St. Gertrude with Masses in Spanish.

Finally, with regards to religious education: the strength of St. Ignatius' religious education program creates an opportunity for regional programs, shared across boundaries, including with ongoing support of the local Jesuit community. Some St. Jerome parishioners already send their children to St. Ignatius religious education. We feel that whatever the final determination regarding the St. Ignatius campus, opportunities should be pursued regarding the integration of this program into the other parishes' communities.

### **Two-parish scenario that keeps all churches open**

#### Scenario 5: 2 parishes, 3 Sunday worship centers

- St. Jerome and St. Ignatius become one parish. Both continue to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass.
- St. Gertrude Parish remains in its current canonical parish structure.

## RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION

While this scenario allows for the possibility of reducing the number of auxiliary buildings, it does not go far enough in bringing together communities to create a more cohesive identity and seems very similar to what is in place. The maintenance of all three worship buildings does not seem financially wise without more concrete ongoing sources of funds. But future growth in the Church may require more worship space, making the preservation of church structures a prudent course.

A drawback to this scenario is it leaves in place two separate parishes (St. Gertrude and St. Jerome) and goes against the vision of working together for the mission of the grouping as a whole and the enhanced financial sustainability that could result with a single parish. Even so, by sharing a business manager between St. Gertrude and St. Jerome, some cost savings could occur.

We recognize that within 25 years the United States will be a minority majority nation. For sustainability, both remaining parishes would need to be able to accommodate worship in more than one language. Some sacramental functions might be enhanced if shared.

#### MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS

The scenario respects local culture and doesn't create a Catholic desert, because of all churches remaining open.

The scenario respects local vitality and culture, because St. Jerome would be able to remain as a solid fixture in the Far Northeast part of the city. This preserves the availability of Spanish, bilingual, and English Masses according to parishioner preference.

With St. Ignatius open as a worship site, this scenario also keeps in place the shrines that form the basis for devotion among Spanish-speaking parishioners: Our Lady of the Clouds (Ecuadoran), Our Lord of the Miracles (Peruvian), and Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexican).

#### PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

The scenario meets the structural principles of Renew My Church.

Keeping up two Sunday worship centers could pose a significant challenge to St. Jerome's finances. At the same time, we believe the assumption that all St. Ignatius parishioners would go to St. Jerome's isn't correct. A large enough proportion, especially of native Spanish-speaking parishioners, would become (or remain) part of the new St. Jerome parish to make this scenario viable. However, the scenario maintains the need for significant capital expenditures at St. Jerome and some at St. Gertrude and likely would require the sale or long-term lease of auxiliary buildings and property to be sustainable.

#### MANAGEABILITY

Given the large number of buildings that are maintained in this scenario, it is unclear how this scenario helps position the grouping well for the future, unless projected increases in the Catholic population of the country are reflected here in the Rogers Park-Edgewater community.

The scenario does not appear to help enough with administration (maintenance and upkeep of three churches) or reduce the burden for sacramental coverage. But it is more manageable than if there were to be only one parish and could include reducing the costs for auxiliary buildings. A shared business / facility operations support staff could help with effective management of the parishes.

**(Continued)**



## LESS VIABLE SCENARIOS

### One parish scenarios

#### Scenario 1:

- 1 parish, 2 Sunday worship centers at St. Gertrude and St. Jerome.
- St. Ignatius ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass.

#### Alternative Scenario 7:

- 1 parish, 1 Sunday worship center.
- St. Gertrude, St. Ignatius, and St. Jerome become one parish and St. Ignatius serves as the parish church and Sunday worship center. St. Gertrude and St. Jerome cease to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and move toward formal closure. Northside Catholic Academy moves to the St. Ignatius school buildings. The Loyola Mission Center proposal's viability in this scenario depends on space availability on the St. Ignatius campus.

## RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION

On the one hand, these scenarios would create an exciting venture that challenges our communities to build authentic diversity. On the other, it would present a challenge to unify effectively. Cultural vitality is a challenge in this scenario, as well as an opportunity. There are few pastors who speak all three needed languages (English, Spanish and Tagalog) while also ministering effectively to different cultures. Unification would be most likely to succeed under creative, intentional, and trilingual pastoral leadership.

Moving to one parish challenges the status quo; combining ministries creates potential for more vitality in ministries, with greater critical mass in those ministries that continue. Uniting as one parish also helps to focus the grouping on how to serve the entire community of Rogers Park and Edgewater.

The scenarios, especially scenario 7, go the furthest in moving beyond the current structures. If you were to start from scratch you would put the parish church in the geographic center of the three parishes, which would be St. Ignatius. This scenario also creates one Eucharistic table for the community – unifying the community as one. A combined parish with proximity to Loyola could promote collaboration with the university and the Jesuit community, which could assist with liturgical celebrations and faith formation.

But scenario 7 closes two vital parishes and it's unclear if parishioners will move to the new location. A one-parish scenario would especially require creative, intentional, and trilingual pastoral leadership. Moving the school introduces potential risks with maintaining the vitality brought by school families. People have moved to or remained in Edgewater for Northside Catholic Academy, and to move NCA's lower elementary campus could be viewed as being disrespectful to them. Many families have a spiritual connection to the current parish that has influenced their decision to attend NCA and their commitment to Christian education. School leadership says the cost could be prohibitive and the move would be complex, especially during the pandemic. However, it appears that there would be more room for the school to grow on the Ignatius campus, which has both an auditorium and a gym.

Locating Sunday worship, under scenario 1, at two churches may create innate difficulties in truly uniting as one new parish community, but is likely necessary given the space needed for English and Spanish Masses in the grouping. Under scenario 7, locating Sunday worship at one church can help with truly uniting as one new parish community.

A significant concern about scenario 7 is sufficient space for Sunday morning Masses in Spanish and English. Concerns about the location of NCA's lower elementary school and sufficient space for Sunday

Masses could be addressed by developing a parish facility plan in the creation of the new parish that envisions the best use of the St. Ignatius and St. Gertrude buildings, which are only a half mile apart, as well as of the St. Jerome buildings.

#### MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS

These scenarios have the disadvantages of a combined parish without the advantages of two pastors/administrations.

Scenario 1 would leave open the farthest north Catholic church in the lakefront area. But in practice, “one parish” could end up functioning as two separated parishes based on culture. This could lead to a split in which Spanish-speaking members of St. Ignatius move to Jerome and English-speaking members move to St. Gertrude.

A challenge with scenario 7 would be that people who live north of St. Jerome or south of St. Gertrude could have trouble getting to church. Access to public transit within a few blocks of St. Ignatius and two parking lots will mitigate that. But scenario 7 creates a potential Catholic desert on the border with Evanston; although Holy Child Jesus’ St. Margaret Mary campus is available for worship, it does not currently offer Spanish-language Mass.

The geographic situation of the parish church, midway between the two other churches which would close, does respond to demographic trends. A challenge would be space constraints for the church and parking, specifically for Spanish Masses, although currently vacant Loyola-owned land could be used to supplement the current two parking lots.

#### PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

These scenarios surpass the foundational principles and the affordability of capital repairs is not out of the realm of possibility. If auxiliary buildings were to be leased or sold, that would help to pay for repairs and upkeep.

A challenge would be school viability and sustainability under scenario 7, but moving the school would allow NCA to appeal to a more diverse population.

Uniting at one location (scenario 7) would offer the most affordable capital option. Specific affordability may depend on the vision for the Ignatius gym/auditorium as that building requires the most work at St. Ignatius campus (\$1 million plus capital needs identified), although sale of surplus facilities could help finance that work. Based on Mass attendance, geography, and facility usage, however, it does appear two active church buildings (scenario 1) are needed to minister to a united parish. For a time, it may be helpful for all three churches to stay open while we understand better what population moves may occur.

#### MANAGEABILITY

These scenarios present several challenges. The number of parishioners would require pastoral assistance, and in scenario 1, the geographical distances between the two churches also would present a challenge to both staff and former Ignatius parishioners.

Ministering to more than 3,200 regular worshippers can be a challenge but is manageable with a strong pastoral and operations team. Funerals often are a significant portion of a pastor and other clergy’s time. The 58 funerals in 2018-19 would be in the top 25% of total funerals in a parish but could be managed with a strong pastoral team.

In scenario 1, maintaining two active campuses, especially older campuses, can be a significant challenge. A strong business / facility operations staff would be needed.

## Scenarios under which St. Jerome's closes

### Scenario 2:

- 1 parish, 2 Sunday worship centers
- St. Gertrude and St. Ignatius remain Sunday worship centers, and St. Gertrude is designated the parish church where the sacramental records are kept for the parish. St. Jerome ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and moves toward formal closure.

### Alternative Scenario 10:

- 2 parishes, 2 Sunday worship centers
- St. Ignatius and St. Gertrude remain in their current parish structures.
- St. Jerome ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and moves toward formal closure. Parishioners from St. Jerome are invited to join either St. Ignatius or St. Gertrude.

## RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION

Moving to one parish (scenario 2) challenges the status quo. Combining ministries creates a potential for more vitality in remaining ministries, with greater critical mass in those ministries that continue.

These scenarios could create a stronger congregation by combining parishes, but St. Jerome has the strongest Sunday attendance and the strongest religious fraternities, despite large decreases in October count since 2000. Many people live close to St. Jerome and travel to church by foot. These scenarios could pose a challenge for those worshipers.

Uniting as one parish (scenario 2) helps to focus the grouping on how to serve the entire community of Rogers Park and Edgewater. In scenario 2, locating Sunday worship at two churches may create innate difficulties in truly uniting as one new parish community. But keeping two worship centers (both) is likely necessary given the space needed for English and Spanish Masses in the grouping.

## MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS

Either scenario could negatively affect ethnic groups present at St. Jerome (East Africa, West Africa, Hispanic, etc.) and has the potential to disrupt the vibrant ministries currently at St. Jerome. However, combining two parishes with large Latino and immigrant populations could make those communities stronger.

The scenarios can be viewed as contrary to the long-term vitality and stability of the Catholic community, since they close the largest congregation (and potentially accelerates the loss of active parishioners), creating a potential Catholic desert on the Far North Side. Most likely, St. Jerome parishioners would go to St. Ignatius given the geographic proximity. It is unclear how this would benefit St. Gertrude.

The remaining parish or parishes would require creative, intentional, and trilingual pastoral leadership with experience bridging divides among communities of different language traditions.

## PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

The scenarios meet the criteria for the parish structural principles including October counts.

Based on the current level of financial support and savings held at the archdiocesan bank, a united parish may struggle to keep up with the total capital needs of both campuses. The potential of the Mission Center at St. Ignatius campus could have significant implications for the capital affordability of scenario 2. Scenario 10 does not leave open the possibility of the Mission Center.

Regardless, reducing the number of auxiliary buildings and trying to gain revenue (by sale or lease) from those buildings will be a necessary source of funds for ongoing capital needs. Based on Mass attendance, geography, and facility usage, it does appear two active church buildings are needed to minister to a united parish.

## MANAGEABILITY

Simply reducing the parish to having two campuses meets Renew My Church structural aspirations. The parish would be easier to manage because all three churches would not be open, but keeping two active, older campuses open could be challenging.

Scenario 10 is manageable for geography and administration because of the reduced number of buildings; however, it does create a need for more Masses at the receiving parishes and may increase pastoral care burden. Scenario 2 would require ministering to over 3,200 regular worshippers, which would be a challenge but is manageable with a strong pastoral and operations team. Funerals often are a significant portion of a pastor and other clergy's time. 58 funerals (in 2018-19) would be in the top 25% of total funerals in a parish.

If the Mission Center at St. Ignatius proceeds and Loyola University is responsible for maintenance of all but the church, Scenario 2 could be more manageable. A strong business / facility operations staff would be needed.

### Scenarios that close St. Gertrude

#### Scenario 3 (One parish scenario):

- St. Jerome and St. Ignatius remain Sunday worship centers, and St. Jerome is designated the parish church where the sacramental records are kept for the parish.
- St. Gertrude ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and moves toward formal closure.

#### Alternative Scenario 9:

- St. Jerome and St. Ignatius remain in their current canonical parish structures.
- St. Gertrude ceases to have regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and moves toward formal closure.

## RENEW MY CHURCH ASPIRATION

In our diverse neighborhood, our ministry should be diverse. These scenarios would move beyond the current structures and combine St. Gertrude with another, more diverse parish.

Moving to one parish challenges the status quo; combining ministries creates potential for more vitality in remaining ministries, with greater critical mass in those ministries that continue. Under Scenario 3, uniting as one parish helps to focus the grouping on how to serve the entire community of Rogers Park and Edgewater. In both scenarios, locating Sunday worship at two churches may create innate difficulties in truly uniting as one new parish community, but is likely necessary given the space needed for English and Spanish Masses in the grouping.

## MEETS LOCAL MISSION NEEDS

Having St. Ignatius remain open and the next parish south being St. Ita's creates something of a Catholic desert, although it is significantly less than the distance between St. Ignatius and St. Nicholas in Evanston or St. Ignatius and the St. Margaret Mary campus of the Holy Child Jesus Parish (as envisioned in scenarios that close St. Jerome).

These scenarios would cut off the pre-K through 4th grade campus of NCA from an easily accessible church for worship, if NCA were not to move. But a move could help to diversify Northside Catholic Academy and set it up for longer-term success.

#### PARISH STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

Both October count and operating revenue would surpass the foundational principles.

Considering that Gertrude is in good financial condition there is less of a financial challenge because Gertrude's yearly donations meet structural principles.

On paper if you were to merge St. Ignatius and St. Gertrude's, you would meet the attendance expectation and finance requirements. St. Gertrude's already can meet those, but this could position the parishes for the future. However, St. Gertrude, in part because of the infusion of capital from NCA that has helped to maintain its buildings, has the lowest capital needs of the three parishes.

These scenarios would put the onus for maintaining campuses with higher capital needs on church communities that are less prepared financially to maintain their campuses.

Reducing the number of auxiliary buildings and trying to gain revenue (by sale or lease) from those buildings will be a necessary source of funds for ongoing capital needs. Based on Mass attendance, geography, and facility usage, it does appear two active church buildings are needed to minister to a united parish.

#### MANAGEABILITY

Having one parish even with two worship centers is too much for one priest to handle and would require having at least one associate pastor. Simply reducing the parish to having two campuses meets Renew My Church structural aspirations. In scenario 3, combining two parishes with large Latino populations makes the Spanish-speaking community stronger. Also, in scenario 3, ministering to more than 3,200 regular worshippers can be a challenge but is manageable with a strong pastoral and operations team.

Funerals often are a significant portion of a pastor and other clergy's time. The 58 funerals (in 2018-19) in all three parishes, as combined in scenario 3, would be in the top 25% of total funerals in a parish but could be managed with a strong pastoral team.

A strong business / facility operations staff would be needed to manage two older campuses. Scenario 3 could be more manageable if the Mission Center at St. Ignatius proceeds and Loyola University is responsible for maintenance of all but the church at that campus.