

March 14, 2019

Dear Parishioners of Saint Joseph Church,

Thank you for being here tonight. Last Thursday someone made me aware of this meeting. Once I knew about it, I reached out to Dave to learn more about what the plans were for tonight. Dave and I had a great conversation and we both want to be communicating the same information about the appeal process. I desire to be present with you tonight, however, Dave and Marilyn felt it would be better if I was not at the meeting so that everyone could speak as they feel.

The process for appealing, as Dave will share with you this evening, is a lengthy process and somewhat expensive. The first step in the Canon Law process of merging is for the pastor to send a letter to the bishop formally requesting canonical merger. Last Fall we made a pastoral announcement concerning the final Mass, which came in a letter from myself and a letter from bishop. The Transition Team plan allowed for a period of time for the community to process the news before the canonical process began. As I announced two Sundays ago we have now begun that process. The Finance Council was aware from the Fall of last year that we would work through a pastoral process to get us in to the new year and then begin the work of the Canon Law process.

On February 20 I sent the letter to the bishop requesting the canonical merger and decree. We then began planning with the trustees of both Saint Lawrence and Saint Joseph the schedule of actions to take place in the months ahead. The Decree from bishop will be sent to me as the pastor. It is my responsibility to post the Decree at the church and on the website. The weekend that I post the Decree I plan to share at Mass the right to appeal that you are granted in accordance with Canon Law.

Please know of my prayers for all of you this evening. My prayer is that this conversation will not cause greater pain, hurt, and division. Please be at peace with one another with where you each are at in the processing of the various emotions and thoughts. I pray that no more friendships are hurt and we as Catholic faithful can journey together in this all.

In order to be transparent and not give any false ideas of hope for certain outcomes I want to share that June 30 will be the final Mass and sacramental activity. If you chose to appeal, that is ok, but there will not be any Masses or Sacraments celebrated at the church in the 3 to 5 years of the appeal. There will be no funerals or gatherings. The church will not be available for rent. We have worked hard to move this painful process through to this point while giving time for people to mourn, celebrate, and prepare for a new normal. I will continue the pastoral plan that the Transition Team has worked hard on to put together over the past months.

If you do not appeal and we move forward together with the merger in July the decision will most likely be to sell the property. This is always a sad thought, however one that in the big picture

makes the most sense to many. We have two parties currently interested in the potential purchase of the property. They reached out to me when they heard the news of the closure. I cannot publicly say who they are, but I believe there is a very good possibility right now of a very good option for how the church of Saint Joseph can still be a beautiful part of the neighborhood and community. In 5 years, I'm not sure this will be as likely of an option.

Dave and I are on the same page in terms of wanting to share the same information with you all. He is acting in his full rights according to Canon Law as he plans for a potential appeal. We will remain in communication so that there will be as little confusion as possible concerning the process and what is happening.

Be good to one another. Know of my love and prayers. May the peace of Christ be close to us all as we walk this road of the Paschal Mystery.

In Christ,

Fr. Ryan

Romans 12:1