

**The Appeal Committee & Parishioners
of St. Jeremiah Parish
41 Brook Street
Framingham, MA 01701**

April 21, 2005

VIA FACSIMILE AND REGULAR MAIL

Most Reverend Sean P. O'Malley, OFM Cap.
Archdiocese of Boston
2121 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, MA 02135

**RE: St. Jeremiah Parish, Framingham
Closing date: May 8, 2005**

Dear Archbishop O'Malley,

We write once again to enlist your personal assistance with respect to a reconfiguration plan gone terribly awry in our North Framingham community. **If the present plan for reconfiguration in North Framingham does not change, it will cost the Archdiocese almost \$1 million to implement the plan.** The present plan is to leave St. George open and close St. Jeremiah. St. George needs almost \$1 million in improvements and/or repairs in order to serve our community. If St. Jeremiah remains open, it will preserve a parish that is presently able to accommodate the needs of the people of North Framingham without any financial investment by the Archdiocese! Please, leave St. Jeremiah open to serve the Catholic community in North Framingham – it will help preserve the limited cash of the Archdiocese!

Members of our parish Appeal Committee met with members of your External Review Committee, Peter Meade and Mary Lou Batt, on March 2, 2005 and made both an oral and written presentation. Our parish was not mentioned in your Press Release of March 31, 2005 concerning your decision to accept certain recommendations of the Committee. We have a scheduled closing date of May 15, 2005 – however, Fr. Frank O'Brien and Fr. Ron Calhoun plan to close St. Jeremiah on May 8, 2005 -- not May 15, 2005! So, we are on a very short time-line. Despite the announcements of March 31st, we as a parish are still in limbo! We need help now!

This letter includes new and important information that is in addition to the information that we provided to Mr. Meade and Ms. Batt during our March 2, 2005 presentation. We request once again that you reconsider your decision to close St. Jeremiah, reverse that decision and leave St. Jeremiah OPEN to serve the needs of our Catholic Community in North Framingham! It will save the Archdiocese \$1 million!

The new developments are as follows:

No Handicap Lift Access to St. George Church-Cost Estimate is Over \$120,000:

Presently St. George Church is not handicap accessible. There were plans in place to add an elevator or lift to make it accessible. Originally, the cost was thought to be @ \$40,000 and an additional \$30,000 was raised just in case. However, Fr. O'Brien stated in last week's St. George Bulletin that he has learned that the cost of constructing the elevator (or lift) to make the Church handicap accessible will actually cost more than \$120,000. This cost is based on a present estimate of all the construction that is needed to install the elevator and does not even include the cost of the electrical work that needs to be done. St. George had raised @ \$70,000 for the installation -- which now falls far short. He also stated that St. George only has @ \$30,000 on deposit from the Promise for Tomorrow Campaign. He stated that he was applying to the Archdiocese for a loan to cover the additional costs for this project (and possibly other needed work at St. George).

In addition, although St. George had obtained a permit for this project – it will expire on May 5th and may not include all the work now known to be necessary to complete the project. It is not clear that ALL necessary approvals from the town have been obtained. As this work will be in a wetlands buffer zone, a variance from the conservation commission which will be needed in addition to the usual town approvals. So, St. Jeremiah is scheduled to close May 8th and there will be no handicap lift access at St. George to enable our elderly and disabled to attend Mass!

As you may already know -- St. Jeremiah's Church is already handicap accessible. Funds are on hand and plans approved for accessibility to our parish hall and we have approximately \$400,000 on deposit with the Archdiocese that will cover the cost of this and other projects.

Facilities Report -- \$700,000 needed for repairs/improvements to St. George:

We have been advised that the facilities report on St. George Parish that was prepared last Fall is now complete. We have repeatedly requested to review the report and still have not been provided a copy. We once again request a copy of any facilities reports prepared on St. George and St. Jeremiah parishes.

We understand that the St. George Facilities report finds that although there are no structural defects to the buildings, **it will cost more than \$700,000** to make the necessary improvements at St. George to keep this parish open. This will certainly not accommodate the needs of a new and larger parish! This confirms the information that we provided to Mr. Meade and Ms. Batt during our meeting.

As you should know by now, St. Jeremiah needs no such improvements in order to serve our North Framingham community. It will not cost the Archdiocese any financial investment to keep St. Jeremiah's open! Based upon these facts, the decision to keep St. George open does not serve the needs of Reconfiguration to retain St. George and close St. Jeremiah. Please keep St. Jeremiah open!

St. Anselm's Chapel proposal: This proposal is not at all what is needed in our area and is unworkable! The parish staff from St. George/St. Jeremiah announced at a transition

committee meeting last week that the only thing that can take place at St. Anselm's is "a weekly Mass!" There were very clear understanding that no other activities can take place using St. Anselm's facilities: meaning among other things that there will be NO CCD at St. Anselm's! Fr. Calhoun expressed that he doesn't even know whether he can live in that rectory! This proposal just doesn't make sense and the personnel who are charged with implementing this plan have made it clear that they have no intention of doing so. This leaves us in an impossible situation.

There are still many serious issues that need to be resolved in North Framingham/South Sudbury. The present plan for Reconfiguration is simply unworkable! St. Jeremiah must stay open to be able to properly serve our Catholic community. We really need two fully functioning parishes to do the job!

Also, if the Archdiocesan financial crisis is as bad as we understand, does it make sense to keep a parish open that needs almost \$1 million in repairs and improvements to serve its people when a parish down the street -- and in a much safer location -- can serve just as well and needs no such repairs/improvements or additional funding from the Archdiocese? This simply makes no sense. This certainly does not serve the needs of reconfiguration as you have announced for the Archdiocese.

Please, Archbishop, take another look at the issues facing our Catholic community in North Framingham. The time is now! We need help and we need it soon. We would be glad to meet with you and/or the members of the External Review committee as soon as possible to discuss this situation. Can we arrange a meeting?

You may contact me at my office at (617) 748-3290 or during the evenings at home (508) 877-9178, or cell phone: (508) 277-8269.

Thanks in advance for your consideration. We continue to pray for the success of your ministry and the future of our Catholic community!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

MARY BETH CARMODY
JACKIE LEMMERHIRT
Co-chairs of the Appeal Committee

cc: Mr. Peter Meade
Ms. Marylou Batt