



St. Jeremiah's Church

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August 3, 2011

VIA CERTIFIED AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

His Eminence Seán P. Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap.
Archbishop of Boston
Pastoral Center
66 Brooks Drive
Braintree, MA 02184-3839

Re: Remonstratio Ad Cautelam Regarding the Closing to Catholics of the Latin Rite Worship at St. Jeremiah Church, Framingham

Dear Cardinal Seán,

We, the parishioners of St. Jeremiah Church, have noted with considerable dismay the press release issued by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston on July 14, 2011, which mentions the plans for our church, *i.e.*, "St. Jeremiah's in Framingham will continue as a worship site for the Syro-Malabar Eastern rite of the Catholic Church, which has its origins in India. An agreement to sell the church to the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Diocese is in its final stages." The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston was also quoted in the press stating that the Syro-Malabar Eastern rite Catholics "have allowed the use of the church by the former parishioners of St. Jeremiah Parish. The local Syro-Malabar priests will be responsible for making any further accommodations for a Latin rite Mass."

We at St. Jeremiah have not been apprised of any official decree, nor have we been in any way consulted in a deliberative way about this decision by any official of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

The statement of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston to the effect that the Syro-Malabar community has "allowed" use of the church by Latin rite Catholics is erroneous and shows a willful disregard of the basics of Canon law: According to Canon law, St. Jeremiah church is owned by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston and its use remains the sole responsibility of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston. Further, the statement to the effect that the Syro-Malabar priests "will be responsible for making any further accommodations for a Latin rite Mass" at St. Jeremiah constitutes an abdication of pastoral responsibility by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston hierarchy, as well as a further violation of Canon law. Thus, if the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston fails to protect, or agrees to preclude, our Catholic worship in our church, the end result would be to restrict Catholic worship in St. Jeremiah to the Eastern Syro-Malabar rite, while excluding Catholics of the Latin rite.

Research by our Canon advocates in Rome indicates that jurisprudence at the Apostolic Signatura would appear to preclude the exclusion - without any canonical procedure - of Latin rite worship in a duly consecrated church hosting this rite. **Therefore, we protest any actions by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston to alienate our church in the strongest possible terms.** We advise you as follows:

1. Please respect the fact that we have pending a canonical recourse in Rome, docketed at the Congregation for the Clergy, against any possible deconsecration of our church by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston;
2. Any actions by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston to alienate our church in a manner that does not clearly accommodate Latin rite Catholics would cause grave injury to these many Catholics of the St. Jeremiah faith community and contravene Canon 1752's all-encompassing duty of "salus animarum;"
3. If such an unfortunate outcome materializes, we would be compelled to take our request for relief beyond the Congregation for the Clergy to another Roman Curia dicastery, because such an outcome would call into question the stewardship of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston hierarchy; and
4. Please recognize and respect that St. Jeremiah Church was a dedicated and restricted gift of the family of Jeremiah Moynihan, to be named in his honor for worship of Catholics of the Latin rite. As you recall, that is why ours is the only Roman Catholic Church in the United States named St. Jeremiah. The use of St. Jeremiah for any other purpose would violate the intent of the gift and be another violation of Canon law.

As always, and in accordance with our previous communications with you and others in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, we remain open to any good faith effort to resolve our differences with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston's hierarchy, provided that any resolution meets our spiritual needs as Latin rite Catholics at St. Jeremiah, and is fully in accord with Canon law.

As you know, our first request has always been that you revisit your decision not to re-establish St. Jeremiah Parish and to fully restore St. Jeremiah **as a parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston** to serve our Catholic community. This remains our request. We could be part of a collaborative with nearby Catholic parishes and continue to serve and welcome back the many Roman Catholics in North Framingham who have left the Church in droves due to the sexual abuse crisis and the damaging process of Reconfiguration I. You, as Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston have the power and authority to restore us as a parish. Should you not do so and should you exclude our Latin rite community from worship at St. Jeremiah, we will pursue our canonical rights up to and including the Apostolic Signatura. This would serve to delay any "sale" of our Church to the Syro-Malabar community for several years.

At your request, in June of 2008, we welcomed the Catholics of the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar community into our St. Jeremiah Church community because we at St. Jeremiah know and understand what it means for a Catholic community to have their own place of worship. We have worked hard during this time to make St. Jeremiah an energetic and committed community for Catholics of both rites. Although it has not always been an easy task, we have made it work. In fact, when Bishop Edyvean visits St. Jeremiah to celebrate the feast of St. Thomas, he has been effusive in his praise and congratulations to the people of St. Jeremiah for their help in accommodating and welcoming the St. Thomas community. At the lunch that follows the Holy Qurbana, the Syro-Malabar community sets two tables at the front of the Church Hall: one for the Bishop and priests in attendance; one for the parishioners of St. Jeremiah who attend. (The rest of the people sit theatre style).

So, there is also an alternative to our primary request: Although the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston is in negotiations with the Syro-Malabar community to purchase St. Jeremiah Church, it is not at all clear that this transaction will be finalized or that the Syro-Malabar Catholics of Boston can truly afford to buy, and then continue to support, St. Jeremiah Church without the full participation of our Latin rite community -- even if such a transaction were not a clear violation of Canon law, which it is. As we have stated to you and Bishop Edyvean in the past, although one community alone may not be able to support our Church, the two communities working together could support and flourish at St. Jeremiah. This is our alternative proposal:

We propose that you re-establish St. Jeremiah as a **parish in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston**. Once re-established, the Syro-Malabar priest in residence could be appointed the Administrator of St. Jeremiah Parish and minister to both communities. The two communities could co-exist as we have done for the past three years with both the Latin rite and Syro-Malabar rite celebrated at St. Jeremiah. There is precedent for this sharing of a worship site by these two communities. In Garfield, New Jersey, for example, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish is part of the Diocese of Newark and shares its facilities with the Syro-Malabar Mission community. The Syro-Malabar Pastor is the Administrator of Our Lady of Sorrow's Parish for the Newark Diocese. The two communities coincide and practice by both Catholic rites continues. Were you to act positively on this proposal, Canon law would not be violated and we could move forward on a positive note to call Catholics of the Latin rite in the North Framingham area home to their Church, St. Jeremiah. And, there would be no need for the protracted appeal that we will be required to pursue otherwise.

Cardinal Seán, as you well know, our community remains strong and steadfast in its commitment to preserve our Parish – our faith community, as well as our Church as our worship site. Parish is where the laity lives its faith. Parish is not just a “brick and mortar” building, it’s a living, breathing community of faith and one is not necessarily interchangeable with another. As you know, “faith is the assurance of what is hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.” We are willing to meet with you to discuss our community and to move forward together. We truly believe the message in the book of our Patron, the Prophet Jeremiah:

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the LORD, and I will change your lot; I will gather you together from all the nations and all the places to which I have banished you, says the LORD, and bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you.

We believe that our proposal is a positive one for both Catholic communities that presently reside at St. Jeremiah. We would like to meet and discuss this option with you at your earliest convenience. If we do not hear from you, we will ask our Canon advocates in Rome to continue to pursue every avenue of appeal.

In faith, we hope to hear **from you** soon that the dialog will begin and our parish will be fully re-established. God bless you!

Sincerely yours,

The Appeal Committee and
Parishioners of St. Jeremiah Parish

By:



MARY ELIZABETH CARMODY



JACQUELINE LEMMERHIRT

cc: Most Rev. Walter J. Edyvean, D.D., S.T.D., Auxiliary Bishop, Western Region
Rev. John Rowan, Pastor, Church of St. George
Mar Jacob Angadiath, Bishop, St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago
Rev. Varghese Naickomparampil, VC, Vicar of Syro-Malabar Church Boston