

## One more church spared as review committee completes work **AP** Associated Press

By Mark Pratt, Associated Press Writer | July 5, 2005

BOSTON --The Boston Archdiocese spared one more church from closing on Tuesday, and extended the life of another parish at least 30 days in what it says are the final decisions on Archbishop Sean O'Malley's reconfiguration plan.

The decision to keep Star of the Sea church in Quincy open as a chapel affiliated with another Quincy church, and to take an additional 30 days to consider the appeal of St. Jeremiah parish in Framingham, appears to leave four parishes out in the cold.

Parishioners at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in East Boston, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini in Scituate, St. James the Great in Wellesley and St. Therese in Everett will continue their round-the-clock vigils despite the fact the archdiocese has apparently closed the door on any possibility of reopening them, said Peter Borre, co-chairman of the Council of Parishes, a coalition of Catholics opposed to the reconfiguration process.

Parishioners at St. Jeremiah, who also have been conducting a vigil, were buoyed by Tuesday's news, said Jackie Lemmerhirt, co-chair of the parish's appeal committee. She said the vigil will continue.

St. Jeremiah is supposed to merge with St. George, but St. George has inadequate handicapped access and parking, and is in need of major repairs, Lemmerhirt said.

The archdiocese will conduct an independent review of both parishes in the next 30 days, she said.

"We're confident that if an objective, outside look is taken, our appeal will be granted and St. Jeremiah will reopen," Lemmerhirt said.

"We don't believe St. George can serve the community of north Framingham adequately, and that two fully functioning Catholic churches are needed," she said.

Twenty of the 83 parishes originally selected for closure have been allowed to stay open, according to Borre's count.

Of four other parishes that remain in vigil, three have appealed to the Vatican, and two are pursuing legal action in the civil courts, he said.

"They are pretty angry," he said. "Twenty other parishes have caught a break, and they are saying 'Why not us?'"

St. Jeremiah has also appealed to the Vatican and initiated legal action in the civil courts, Lemmerhirt said.

O'Malley plans to let the appeals process run its course, archdiocese spokesman Terry Donilon said.

"The archbishop ... is hopeful and continues to pray that these vigils will end in a peaceful and spiritual transition to new parishes," Donilon said.

O'Malley announced the reconfiguration in May 2004. He said the reorganization was needed because of declining Mass attendance, a shortage of priests and a financial crisis caused in part by the clergy sex abuse scandal.

In response to criticism, O'Malley in October established an eight-person committee to re-examine some of the closures, led by Peter Meade, an executive with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, and Sister Janet Eisner, president of Emmanuel College.

The Meade-Eisner Committee has completed its work, with the exception of St. Jeremiah, the archdiocese announced Tuesday. ■

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