

Praying for parish, group spends night in church

By D. Craig MacCormack / Daily News Staff

Thursday, May 12, 2005

FRAMINGHAM -- Don Goyette has not decided yet where he will go to church now that St. Jeremiah's is in vigil. But he believes in the cause of keeping the parish open, so he decided to make himself at home there last night.

Goyette was in the St. Jeremiah's choir but has a daughter in CCD classes at St. George's, as part of the reconfiguration of the Archdiocese of Boston, and a sister who wants him to join the choir at St. Cecelia's in Ashland.

He is mulling all his options.

"I care about the people here (at St. Jeremiah's) and I care about the people at St. George's, too," Goyette, an amateur musician, said as he sat comfortably in a chair reviewing the user's manual of his new 12-track digital music recorder.

"I don't have as much invested in this church as some other people, but it's a shame that a handful of people can ruin so many innocent people's lives," he said.

The whirring of fans kept the church relatively cool as the night owls settled in to catch some shut-eye on air mattresses. Goyette dined on peanuts and Gatorade as he read his manual in the back of the church.

He was joined on the overnight shift by Luis Carmody, son of Appeals Committee co-Chairwoman Mary Beth Carmody. The sleepover is a key part of the around-the-clock vigil, said Appeals Committee member Lorraine Dray.

"It's a remarkable kind of feeling, very peaceful," said Dray, an original St. Jeremiah's communicant. "It's very moving when you wake up and see the stained-glass windows and remember where you are and why."

Dray expects a solid turnout this weekend for a pair of Communion services, Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 10:15 a.m. But she knows some of St. Jeremiah's parishioners will go to Mass at St. George's instead, and she's OK with that.

"I totally support the people who can move over to St. George's and feel at peace with their decision," said Dray, who expects to be among the regulars on the overnight shift.

"It would be nice if they joined us to make a statement that this is our church and the archdiocese needs to listen to us. Sometimes the only time they care about us is when they want our money," she said.

Speaking of money, Dan Jones wondered what will become of the \$400,000 in the St. Jeremiah's central fund when the decree of suppression takes effect at noon tomorrow.

St. Anselm's in Sudbury, he said, had about \$600,000 in a similar fund that was turned over to the archdiocese when that church was shut down. Six months later, the vigil continues at St. Anselm's, but the money has not come back.

"There's no company in the world that would merge and take away an asset," said Jones, a St. George's parishioner who plans to help with the St. Jeremiah's vigil.

With confirmation set for Saturday at 11 a.m. at St. George's, Mary Beth Carmody and Jones -- both confirmation teachers -- took time last night to quiz each other on things every candidate should know.

Carmody has been pleased with the vigil and the strength in numbers it has secured.

"People who haven't come to church in years are coming by," she said. "It's building every day. We knew what the sentiment was under the surface, but we all needed to get past that final Mass."

Jones hopes to see a smattering of parishioners from St. Stephen's, St. Bridget's, St. George's, St. Tarcisius and St. Jeremiah's for this weekend's Communion services, he said.

"I'm disappointed as a Catholic that more people don't feel for these people (at St. Jeremiah's)," he said. "There's still a crisis. There are issues that haven't been resolved.

"This is something we should all wrap our arms around," he said.

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