

Not giving up the faith

By D. Craig MacCormack / Daily News Staff

Saturday, May 14, 2005

FRAMINGHAM -- The sound of the bells dedicated to Christa McAuliffe at noon yesterday was supposed to signal a cataclysmic event for those in vigil at St. Jeremiah's Church.

Instead, parishioners focused on spiffing up the parish for this weekend's communion services by replacing some of the items that were taken down Monday by local carpenter David Murphy under guidance from pastor the Rev. Ron Calhoun.

Adam Sell and Lance Tushim returned a statue of Jesus and flags representing the United States and the Vatican to their original places in the church and worked on wiring the parish for wireless Internet access.

"It's going to make it look like a real church again," said Sell.

Hanging on the bulletin board was the revised decree of suppression, this version without references to St. Jeremiah becoming the "territory of St. George's" and the order to bring "canonical registers of St. Jeremiah's (to) St. George's."

The new decree also removes a requirement "that the goods and obligations of St. Jeremiah's become the goods and obligations of the Archdiocese of Boston."

The Appeals Committee has until May 23 to appeal the decree.

"Obviously they dropped off the pieces that made sense," said William Sell. "They realized we might have a case."

Visitors from St. Anselm's in Sudbury, Hopkinton and other communities made stops at St. Jeremiah yesterday to show support and pray for a resolution of the situation.

"We've had a lot of support over there, so I just felt I wanted to be here today," said Nancy Carmel of St. Anselm's, who has participated in that vigil nearly every day for the past eight months.

Shortly before noon, parishioners led by original St. Jeremiah communicants Grace Corrigan and Thomas Tierney and Appeals Committee co-Chairwoman Jackie Lemmerhirt filed a lawsuit in Middlesex Superior Court against the archdiocese.

The lawsuit asks for a declaratory judgment that the parishioners own the parish and includes an injunction to prevent the removal of sacred objects from the church until all appeals have been exhausted.

"This is probably our last remaining hope to save our church and bring some reform for the archdiocese," said Tierney.

As the bells chimed to mark the noon hour, Lemmerhirt led a rosary service for about two dozen people. Among the participants was Nadine McGrath, 79, of Joseph Road.

"I was here for the first Mass, my four kids had their first communion and confirmation here, my daughter Lonnie was married here and my husband John's funeral service was here," said McGrath. "This is a very sad day.

"I can pray for a miracle, but I don't know if it's going to happen," she said.

McGrath taught CCD and led some of the Girl Scouts through St. Jeremiah, where she has been a parishioner since the July 1958 opening. She isn't sure where she'll go to Mass from now on.

"When I can accept this, I'll go to St. George's," she said.

While no one came to St. Jeremiah to formally lock the door or change the locks, archdiocese spokesman Terry Donilon yesterday said the church is officially closed as of noon.

"The archbishop (Sean O'Malley) continues to pray for a peaceful resolution to this vigil...and for a successful transition to new parishes," he said in a statement.

"The archbishop is grateful to all who contribute to the strengthening of the archdiocese through their participation in the life of our church," said Donilon.

Shortly before 5 p.m. yesterday, archdiocese auditor Filomena Scibelli and former St. Jeremiah Finance Council Chairman

Photo Gallery



St. Jeremiah's parishioner Jean Jewell studies the latest letter from the Archdiocese of Boston while holding her grandson, Joseph Allen Clifford. (Ken McGagh photo)

Herald Interactive Tools

 [View Graphic Version](#)

 [Email to a Friend](#)

 [Sign Up for Home Delivery](#)


 **SEARCH:** Enter keyword(s)

all relevance

Related Local News Coverage

 [Praying for parish, group spends night in church](#)

 [Sacred objects returned to church](#)

 [St. Jeremiah's won't hold Ash Wednesday service](#)

 [No daily Mass at parish](#)

 [Parishioners vow to continue fight to stay open](#)

John Homberg emerged from an all-day session in the rectory, reviewing financial records, without talking.

They lugged a number of large boxes to their car and drove away but did not comment on the meeting.

(*Craig MacCormack can be reached at 508-626-4429 or cmaccorm@cnc.com.*)

[[contact us](#)] :: [[print advertising](#)] :: [[online advertising](#)] :: [[Browser Upgrade](#)] :: [[Jobs](#)] :: [Click here for home delivery](#) or call
1.800.982.4023

© Copyright of CNC and Herald Interactive Advertising Systems, Inc.

No portion of townonline.com or its content may be reproduced without the owner's written permission. [Privacy Commitment](#)

0.015604