

O'Malley writes letter to vigil group

By D. Craig MacCormack / Daily News Staff

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FRAMINGHAM -- As the around-the-clock vigil hit the three-week mark yesterday, Archbishop Sean O'Malley sent a letter to the St. Jeremiah's Appeal Committee saying officials will not move anything out until the parishioners' fight is over.

In his letter, sent directly to committee co-Chairwoman Jackie Lemmerhirt, O'Malley said the committee should disregard the first closing letter sent by the Archdiocese of Boston April 25 and focus only on the May 11 version.

O'Malley also wrote that he plans to reply to the St. Jeremiah appeal within the 30-day window provided. Co-Chairwoman Mary Beth Carmody dropped the appeal off at the chancery in Brighton last Friday.

Almost 250 visitors have signed the guest book at the back of the church, including Gregory Sullivan, a former St. Jeremiah parishioner who stopped in to say a prayer -- in his tuxedo -- on the way to his wedding Saturday.

"There's been a lot of new faces," said Lemmerhirt.

And plenty of familiar ones too, including Mary Ann Mendenhall, who said her broken leg in February was a sign that she was called to help the vigil.

"We're still going strong," she said yesterday.

The church will host its second pizza and movie night tonight at 6:30 p.m. with "Finding Nemo" as this week's feature. Lemmerhirt expects members to host a cookout at the church when the weather improves, she said.

The movie night gives families a reason to take part in the vigil, said Lemmerhirt. Some youngsters have even enticed their parents to let them stay at the church overnight, she said.

"We seem to be doing really well on the overnight," said Lemmerhirt.

In other news, Lemmerhirt, Carmody and other Appeal Committee members may go to a panel discussion of representatives from churches in vigil June 5 at 6:30 p.m. at the parish of St. Ignatius Church of Loyola on Commonwealth Avenue in Chestnut Hill.

That church's Voice of the Faithful chapter is looking for experiences from parishioners at closed churches, said Carmody.

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