

St. Jeremiah hopes to hear status by Monday

By D. Craig MacCormack / Daily News Staff

Saturday, June 18, 2005

FRAMINGHAM -- While several churches in the Archdiocese of Boston this week heard they will not be closing as scheduled, the fate of St. Jeremiah's Parish remains in limbo as time melts away on the parishioners' appeal.

Archbishop Sean O'Malley has until Monday to rule on whether to overturn St. Jeremiah's May 13 closure based on information provided to him by members of the Appeals Committee fighting to save it with an around-the-clock vigil.

The vigil reached the six-week mark on Thursday, but there has still been no indication on the May 21 appeal, said Appeals Committee co-Chairwoman Jackie Lemmerhirt.

"We haven't heard anything," she said. "Hopefully we'll be in the next group."

Two churches scheduled to close -- St. Isidore in Stow and St. Mary of the Angels in Roxbury -- will stay open under Thursday's restructuring plan. St. Lawrence in Brookline will become a chapel under St. Mary in Brookline.

St. Susanna of Dedham will stay open until at least March 2008 and the closing dates for St. Pius X in Milton and Sacred Heart in Watertown were rescinded. St. Peter Lithuanian in South Boston will not close.

Lemmerhirt would not predict how O'Malley would rule on St. Jeremiah's appeal.

"I really don't know what's going to happen," said Lemmerhirt. "I can't even begin to speculate what's next."

Archdiocese spokesman Terry Donilon said yesterday he has not been told about any change in St. Jeremiah's status and it remains closed at this point.

In other news, the Historical Commission added the parish to the town's cultural resource index Thursday night, the first step in process of getting it added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The town's index includes more than 600 buildings, bridges, monuments and other structures that have architectural, cultural, or historical significance, said Historical Committee Chairman David Marks.

The ties to teacher-astronaut Christa McAuliffe were key factors in the commission's decision, he said. McAuliffe went to the church, and the church's bells are named in honor of the Challenger disaster victim.



The Appeals Committee and town historian Steve Herring now hope to get St. Jeremiah's or the carillon bell system dedicated to McAuliffe on the National Register of Historic Places.

The local historical society will make the nomination to the Massachusetts Historical Society. If the state group nominates the church or the bell device to the National Park Service, it would take about 45 days to join the list. Across the country, there are about 83,000 places on the register.

The church itself is unlikely to be chosen for the historic designation because it is about 45 years old, while the list generally is made up of buildings and places that date back at least 50 years.

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