

UPDATE FOR MARCH 02, 2017 (Day 2,037 of the Closure, 5 years and 7 months)

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Dear SOCA members and friends,

APPEAL TO THE VATICAN

As of the end of February, we had not heard from the Congregation for the Clergy regarding our appeal against Bishop Henry's Decree relegating St. Patrick's Church to Profane but not Sordid Use or, as Cardinal Stella of the Congregation prefers to put it, Secular but not Unbecoming use. Whichever terms you prefer to use, the outcome is the same - if the Decree is carried out, St. Pat's will cease to exist as a church and will most likely be razed to the ground. To me this is an unthinkable act of destruction. How can anyone with full knowledge of the history and beauty of this 103-year old church even contemplate such a wanton act of desecration? It would indeed be a tragic loss to our city.

To convey some idea of the scope of the loss, SOCA has produced a 6-page brochure that gives a brief history of St. Pat's and ends with some views expressed about St Patrick's Church by several people.

"ONE-SIDED AND DEBATABLE"

I have been asked why the brochure could not be distributed with the All Saints weekend Bulletins. The answer is simple: Father Kevin denied us permission to do so on the grounds that the brochure was "one-sided and debatable." Frankly, I find that comment ironic. For ten years and more, we have had the views of the establishment broadcast in several ways including from the pulpit, in newsletters, parish bulletins, posters and even a slick, professionally produced DVD. We were told, "The status quo is unacceptable!" and were refused permission to raise any issue related to saving our churches for discussion at parish general meetings. Now we are refused permission to distribute a 6-page brochure because it is "one-sided and debatable" and it attempts to "present one side of a very complex and drawn out issue that cannot be properly covered in 6 pages"! Whatever the case, the brochure represents the views of a sizeable proportion of the parishioners of All Saints parish, some of whom have been parishioners of St. Patrick's Church before even I was born (and that was over 80 years ago!) Surely their views on this debatable and contentious issue have a right to be heard?

Father Kevin allows that it is our "right and privilege" to print and distribute the brochure but he believes that he will have to "handle the fall out as it comes." Let's face facts. The fall out began over ten years ago when plans to build a new church and sell the three present churches were announced - and that announcement did not come from SOCA. And the fall out has continued since then.

SALE OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES CLOTHES BANK PROPERTIES

At the P.A.C. meeting held on February 15, 2017, Fr. Kevin announced that the two buildings that belonged to Catholic Charities Clothes Bank that were seized by Bishop Henry have been sold. After the lawyers fees, the Diocesan loan and taxes were deducted, the Diocese had a balance of nearly \$800,000 (the exact figure will be in the minutes of the PAC meeting). That balance has been transferred to the new church Building Fund. While this massive injection of funds is a windfall for the Building Fund, I think it's a crying shame that money from the sale of a building that housed a business operated **for the poor** should go to a building fund for a \$21 million church that many parishioners feel is not needed. In these difficult economic times, I truly believe that the money should instead have been used to benefit a charitable organization like the St. Vincent de Paul Society for the poor, or those in desperate need like the Syrian refugees in the camps in Turkey.

While I am not opposed in theory to a new church, when I consider all the circumstances surrounding the building of the proposed edifice and the division it has brought into our All Saints parish, it certainly gives me pause. It seems unwise to me to build an edifice, however praiseworthy, on the shifting sands (or a boggy swamp for that matter!) of dubious arguments when we already have three fully paid up churches. The end does not justify the means, especially in our Catholic faith where we are asked to go the extra mile for the poor. One has to ask, is this what Jesus would have done? Sell three perfectly viable churches for a paltry amount and build a \$21 million structure?

Yes, Father Kevin, perhaps you are right. A 6-page brochure hardly even begins to tell the full story...

God bless!

Francis, Secretary of SOCA

cc Very Rev. Kevin Tumback, Pastor; Rev. Lukas Drpal, Associate Pastor; Mr. Philip Gray, J.C.L., Canon Lawyer