

Office of the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Calgary

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of All Saints Parish

Our Diocesan Church is a church in transition - preparing for the needs of the Church in the 21st Century. We have been engaged in a strategic planning process, beginning in 1999, in which the people have been invited to analyze our current situation; develop strategies for the next 25 years and beyond; deal with our expansion and population growth, program enhancement and development of new services; and evaluate the financial stability and physical condition of existing parish facilities.

As a result of this lengthy process, a new Roman Catholic Parish in the City of Lethbridge, called All Saints Roman Catholic Parish, was established on November 1, 2006. This new parish is the result of merging the three East Lethbridge Parishes into one new parish.

After much consultation and seeking to reach a consensus, it was determined that we needed a new church facility consisting of a Nave - seating 1200, a Eucharistic chapel, gathering space, office space, meeting rooms, a parish hall and a commercial kitchen. An Architectural firm was hired to undertake the Conceptual Design and to complete a final design.

In our search for a new church site, we found that suitable land was hard to find and very few sites have met our criterion for location, site access, adequate parcel size, and timely availability. After investigating 17 sites we have narrowed our investigations to one site located south of Highway 4, East of 43 Street. This site met all of our criterion and we reached an agreement with Clearview Development Corporation for purchasing land at this location. This development places our new church in a residential development with a Seniors Independent Living Facility adjacent to the new church.

As we moved ahead with our planning and decision-making, a number of parishioners, principally for aesthetical and historical reasons, asked that a way be found to save St. Patrick's Church. I had hoped that if we could find a way to save St. Patrick's that would unify the community and restore momentum and proposed what I thought would be a win-win scenario for everyone, i.e. renovating and converting St. Patrick's into a Chapel and reconfiguring the basement into a Columbarium. The idea of a Columbarium is not only in keeping with our ancient and sacred traditions as Catholics but the revenues generated would also have enabled present and future renovation and maintenance costs to be met without adding to the burden of the parish and new church construction.

The Columbarium plan was presented, opposed by a vocal few, and it would seem the majority of parishioners were lukewarm in their support.

From the outset of our journey to re-tool our pastoral care delivery system, I have been emphasizing a made in Lethbridge solution, if possible. However, I also added that if the community couldn't agree that I would have to step in and decide the matter. After further consultation with the Diocesan Planning Commission, regrettably, that time has come.

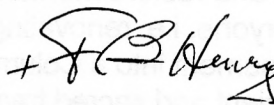
Accordingly, St. Patrick's Church will be shuttered effective August 1, 2011. I have chosen this date to allow couples who have weddings booked at St. Patrick's in May, June and July to celebrate them there. Couples with weddings booked in September and beyond have enough time to find a new location. Groups using St. Patrick's will have time in August to re-locate to a new venue for the start of their fall programming rather than move in mid-year.

I sincerely hope that this closure will be temporary but it will continue until a funding program has begun that will ensure that the future financial viability of St. Patrick's is secure. Such a plan must be one that places no undue burden on All Saints Parish over the long term and must be acceptable to the Diocesan Planning Commission, the Diocesan Finance Council, and the Diocesan Consulters.

For those parishioners who find this decision difficult or impossible to accept, I would suggest that for both your personal well-being and that of the Eastside faith community that serious consideration be given to joining the worshipping community at St. Martha's Parish in West Lethbridge. I am sorry that it has come to this but we must move ahead and accelerate the building of the new All Saints Church.

Wishing you all the best, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. B. Henry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

□ F. B. Henry
Bishop of Calgary.