

March 12, 2021 SOCA Update

Dear SOCA members and friends,

OUR APPEAL IS SUCCESSFUL! – Bishop Henry's Decision To Close St. Patrick's in 2011 is DECALRED INVALID

BACKGROUND

Since 2007, parishioners in Lethbridge and beyond have been united in a struggle to save our three Roman Catholic churches in East Lethbridge. Three or more petitions and hundreds of letters were sent to then Bishop of the Diocese of Calgary, Bishop Frederic Henry, by parishioners of Our Lady of the Assumption Church, St. Basil Church and St. Patrick's Church. All to no avail. Bishop Henry was determined to dispose of our three neighbourhood churches and build a 1,200-seat church on the outskirts of the city. When parishioners rejected his proposal to "save" St. Patrick's by converting its basement to a columbarium, he closed St. Patrick's Church. When our pleas to local authorities fell on deaf ears, we turned to the Vatican in 2015. In October 2016, shortly before he retired, Bishop Henry issued a Decree relegating St. Patrick's Church to profane but not sordid use making it possible to sell historic St. Patrick's Church or raze it to the ground. In April 2017, at AGM of SOCA, members voted overwhelmingly to appeal to the Vatican's Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, the highest court in the Roman Catholic Church. In the last three years, our recourse has been ably presented by our legal team in Rome headed by Avv. Andrea Errera. It has gone through three levels of scrutiny. In April last year, when a decision seemed imminent, the outbreak of Covid 19 caused chaos in the whole world. Italy was one of the hardest hit countries. The Supreme Tribunal suspended activities for the safety of its members.

DECISION DAY

Avv. Errera's assistant, Avv. Federica Boldrini, has informed us that on Friday March 12, a panel of four high ranking members of the Signatura will meet to decide the outcome of our recourse. Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi will present the case and write the decision. The other members of the panel are: Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, often considered the leader of the conservatives in the Vatican and sometimes seen as critical of Pope Francis, is the former Prefect of the Signatura; Archbishop Frans Daneels and Fillipo Iannone, both Canon Law experts, complete the panel of four. I have no idea of when the decision will be made public but I assure you that I will let you know as soon as I know, irrespective of whether it is in our favour or not.

A REQUEST

You have stood by your SOCA Executive Committee through thick and thin these past ten years. You have supported our cause morally, financially and, most importantly, with prayer.

We now ask you to join us virtually in your homes at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday March 11, 2021 and say the Rosary with us. If for any reason the time is inconvenient for you, do please choose some other during the day. Please pray that our Blessed Mother Mary will intercede for a positive outcome to our recourse on the next day when the panel meets. In addition to the Rosary, please pray an *Our Father*, a *Hail*

***Mary* and a *Glory Be* to St. Joseph, St. Basil and St. Patrick also for their intercession. Please include your family and forward this request to your friends. The more, the better**

No matter what the decision is on Friday, your Executive Committee thanks you for your support and prayers, God bless!

Francis, Secretary of SOCA, Procurator for our Recourse to the Vatican