

Francis' SOCA Update

May 2, 2014

May 2, 2014, Day 974 of the closure

Dear SOCA members and friends.

On May 28th, 2014, we shall complete 1000 days since the closure of St. Patrick's Church. It is indeed sad that such a length of time has passed by without the Diocese of Calgary realizing that the closure serves no purpose at all and is seen by many as a punitive measure unworthy of a Bishop. No matter whether the Parish or the Diocese are paying the approximately \$29,000 p.a. City taxes on the Church because it is not being used for religious purposes, ultimately it is parishioners who pay the bill. The money paid in taxes would have gone a long way towards repairs and renovations. Meanwhile the building continues to deteriorate and the mold problem remains unattended to and presumably grows worse by the day.

It is facile to suggest that parishioners were given the option to come up with a solution. It is not the parishioners who ordered the church to be closed. No guarantee was given that if the parishioners came up with a solution that the church would continue to function as a **regular** church as it had for nearly a century before. No explanation was given as to why parish funds in the Diocesan Central Fund could not be utilized for carrying out the repairs. And, let's face it, the ostensible reason for the closure, the rejection of the proposal to convert the basement of the church to a columbarium has now been declared ill-advised by none other than the Building Committee that kept silent when the columbarium was originally proposed.

It is time that the whole situation is reviewed judiciously. We are not engaged in some petty stubborn contest to see who will blink first. The welfare of our three churches is very close to our hearts and so is the welfare of All Saints parish. All Saints Parish is much more split and divided than it was when it was three separate parishes and it need not be the case. It is time for a collaborative model to solve the impasse rather than a top-down model that has only brought us grief and a stalemate that refuses to go away.

Have the last thousand days shed no light on our situation in Lethbridge?