

May 23, 2006 ¹⁷ *Y*

Fr. Gerold Chonacki, S.J.
Provincial of Jesuit's. NY Province
NY Province of the Society of Jesus
39 E. 83rd St.
New York, NY 10028-0810

Dear Fr. Chojnacki:

We are writing to you today because we are in great need of assistance.

Recently, our parish, St. Mary's in Jamesville, NY, was told that we will be forced to close as of 7-1-07. St. Mary's is located in upstate, New York and approximately five miles from Le Moyne College.

St. Mary's is unique and vital to the Jamesville community. It is a vibrant, financially sound parish with no debt and numerous outreach programs, a strong religious education program and rising Sacramental index, including first communion and confirmation numbers. The Church and Rectory are in good physical condition, and the grounds are well-maintained. The parish has remained a strong and committed church community due primarily to the involvement of its parishioners. Fr. Manno, St. Mary's Parochial Vicar, has recently commended us on these efforts by stating that all he had to do was walk in the door and 'say mass' for our recent Easter Vigil. (A more detailed summary of St. Mary's parish is enclosed.)

We have recently met with Fr. William Dolan, S.J. at Le Moyne college. Fr. Joe Lingan, S.J. has said mass at our church and has offered to help. We have not been able to reach or meet with Fr. Lingan, as he has been traveling recently.

We recognize the great work you are doing in helping the economically and educationally disadvantaged in the new Cristo Rey Schools. We also recognize the new mission of Le Moyne College President, Rev. Charles Beirne, S.J. who will be leaving us soon to help build the first Jesuit University in Africa. But, there is also great need here at home and the reason why we are seeking your assistance at this time.

We understand that Le Moyne does not have a youth religious education program and are wondering if a relationship between the Jesuits and St. Mary's would be mutually beneficial at this time. Parishioners have also suggested starting a possible Le Moyne College scholarship fund as a way of *thanking the Jesuits for any assistance they could give us.*

We currently only have one Saturday evening mass (until 7-1-07). In order to continue to meet the spiritual needs of the growing number of community members, we need one mass on Saturday evening and one mass on Sunday morning to continue.

Is it possible for you to adopt our parish, as you have done for others in great need? Or, at the very least, is it possible for a local Jesuit such as Fr. Lingan or Fr. Tom Benz or another available Jesuit to say mass at our parish, until our Administrative Recourse Process has been completed?

We anxiously await your response and are grateful for any assistance you can give us at this time.

Sincerely in Christ,

Colleen K. LaTray
Parish Pastoral Council Representative
Religious Education Instructor
4142 W. Shore Manor
Jamesville, NY 13078
315 492-7929

P.S. Enclosed please find an attachment with your picture. In an effort to learn even more about the Jesuits and yourself, I found this picture of you on the internet and thought I would forward it to you with this letter. You look like a very nice man and I pray that you can help us.

Cc: Fr. William Dolan, S.J.
Fr. Joseph Lingan, S.J.