

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

6437 East Seneca Turnpike, P.O. Box 368
Jamesville, NY 13078-0368

December 12, 2006

Dear Friends,

We have all been reading in recent days of church consolidation and thus we write to you.

You have all worked earnestly to revitalize St. Mary's and that is commendable and builds community. You have followed the prompting of the Holy Spirit and we pray you continue to do so.

We feel obligated to let you know "where things stand" at this point. In October, St. Mary's became a mission of Holy Cross and already we have seen the great work that can be accomplished in the Lord's name when we work together to proclaim the Gospel. We are certain that this will continue in the days ahead. At the same time, we must consider the reality that confronts us as a diocesan church, namely, the priest shortage and Bishop Moynihan's request to see how the Church can be served in all areas with fewer priests. To this end it should be noted:

- We presently have 156 active priests with an average age of 68.
- By 2010, three years from now, we will have only 100 active priests with an average age of 70.
- Presently, we have 45 priests over 70 and some 15 of the 45 are near 80 years of age.
- The Bishop must plan for the future in ways that will allow for the remaining priests to serve the people of our diocese.
- At Thanksgiving every Pastoral Care Area submitted proposals to the Bishop regarding how the current ecclesial situation could best be handled. Our Pastoral Care Area Consists of St. Mary's, Holy Cross, Our Lady of Solace, and St. Theresa's. Essentially, the Bishop is asking how our Pastoral Care Area can be handled by **one priest**.
- The proposals that the joint leadership of St. Mary's and Holy Cross sent to Bishop Moynihan are as follows:
 1. Have two sites:
 - a) St. Mary's and Holy Cross at one site.
 - b) St. Theresa's and Our Lady of Solace at one site.
 2. Have one site (combine all four parishes)
All four parishes would come together at one site – Holy Cross

3. St. Theresa to be part of the Alibrandi Catholic Center at Syracuse University with the goal of the Center eventually coming back to the diocese (now operated by Franciscans) Our Lady of Solace have Masses at Holy Cross and Our Lady of Solace Church be used as an outreach center to the neighborhood.
 4. Have two sites:
 - a) St. Mary's
 - b) Holy Cross
- Since the mandate calls for our Pastoral Care Area to be served by one priest, it is inevitable that consolidation of Masses at one or two sites will take place.
 - Bishop Moynihan will be meeting with his advisors early in the new year and hopefully his decision regarding our Pastoral Care Area as well as the others will be made public soon after that.

The leadership of St. Mary's and Holy Cross has worked diligently to devise these proposals. We pray that the Bishop and his advisors will prayerfully consider all of the proposals and make a decision that is inspired by the Holy Spirit and serves the entire Pastoral Care Area in the best way possible.

Should the fourth recommendation not be accepted, we will be following the consolidation timeline you received in September.

No matter what happens, we recognize that the Church is community and in working together with other Catholics, we can keep our community and our faith vibrant! St. Mary's and Holy Cross have already charted a course of collaboration and cooperation and we pray that we will experience continued growth in the Spirit as we strive to share the Good News of Jesus with others!

Please continue to pray that we may listen to God's voice calling us to rebuild His Church!

With every best wish for a most blessed Advent Season, we are

Sincerely yours,



Reverend John D. Manno
Parochial Vicar



Reverend Monsignor J. Robert Yeazel
Pastor