

Dear Dr. Barr,

If St. Pius X were located in a neighborhood that was dying, as do many of the churches in Baltimore City, the parishioners would accept the closing of our church. But we don't. We live in a densely populated area with predominantly young families (area median age within 10-minute walk: 38.2; compared with Cathedral of Mary Our Queen which is 45.3)¹. Contrary to what Bishop Lewandowski said during our meeting, our neighborhoods are not affected by white flight out of the City. Our neighborhoods are a destination for anyone fleeing the City. Rodgers Forge and Stoneleigh have some of the best public schools in the entire County. By Seek the City's own demographic maps, St. Pius X is located in one of the densest and wealthiest areas of Catholics within its parameters. St. Pius X has an area density (households within a 10-minute walk) of 1,839 compared to Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, which has a density of 307. St. Pius X has more Catholics within a 10-minute walk than has Cathedral: 927 compared to 354. St. Pius X even has a better ratio of baptisms to funerals than the Cathedral: 2.50 to 2.20.²

These are facts—based on Seek the City's own data—and these facts are why the parishioners of St. Pius X don't believe their Parish should close. These facts are also why they believe there is only one real reason to close St. Pius X and that is the value of the Parish and school land. We strongly believe that the main reason the parish school has not been sold is so the Archdiocese to sell the entire property.

This is why we are fighting to keep our Parish open: It is simply wrong [sinful?] to close a sacred place of worship and disperse a worship community for money.

If there are valid reasons why the school cannot be sold separately from the entire property, we ask the Archdiocese to explain them to a meeting of parishioners. Collectively, we have invested many thousands of dollars into St. Pius X School and Parish and in the Archdiocese over decades. The Archdiocese owes us a full and honest explanation as to why they need this property.

If we are wrong in our belief, then there is no reason for the Archdiocese not to give us time to demonstrate whether or not we can attract a larger congregation. Nothing can be done with the property for about two years anyway, and the Archdiocese has many other closed parishes to dispose of in the meantime.

Give the Parishioners of St. Pius X time to prove whether we can be self-sustaining *once the school is sold*, without tying our hands with a pastor whose full-time job is Judicial Vicar of the Archdiocese.

If we fail, then we will give up the fight and let St. Pius X Church close.

¹¹ Seek the City, North Region – Data Toolkit (March 8, 2024), pp. 6-7

² Ibid., pp. 4-5

Thank you for scheduling the video meeting with myself, and the multiple committed parishioners of Saint Pius X. As discussed, here is the proposal from our group to present to His Excellency, Archbishop Lori, for his sincere and serious consideration.

1. The parishioners ask to remain open with a Pastor who is committed to the shared goals **with** parishioners. Saint Pius X has only been in decline under a model where the pastor is serving two parishes, one of which was in decline at the time the pastorate was created. The parishioners would like to be provided the chance and opportunity to have a pastor serving only Saint Pius X Parish so that they may be able to demonstrate their ability to evangelize to the many Catholics in the Towson area of Baltimore County who are seeking a home parish.

To this end, we propose a strategic pause on any decision to modify, change, or close Saint Pius X Parish, so that the Parishioners are afforded an opportunity to sell the School building. Once the school building is sold to satisfy any and all outstanding debt, the parish would be permitted a two (2) year timeframe to demonstrate to the Archdiocese its sustainability, stability, and growth. The parish will focus on outreach, evangelization, and social justice ministries to serve the wider community.

2. An alternative proposal by the Saint Pius X parishioners suggest that the Archdiocese keep Saint Pius X Church open as a Worship Site, while officially merged with the Cathedral under Father Bianco as pastor, such that the proposed Saint Pius X Church (Worship site) will have a continuation of weekend Masses (including a return of the Saturday Vigil Liturgy) and celebration of the Sacraments.

With support from Father Bianco, Saint Pius X worshippers would create a committee to evangelize to former parishioners and the nearly 1,000 Catholics within a one (1) mile walk of Saint Pius X Church. The Saint Pius X worshippers would work with Father Bianco to expand various ministries, particularly the Social Justice and Environmental ministries. This would also be a basis for the Saint Pius X community to demonstrate (to the Archdiocese) their ability to be self-sustaining and grow over time, under a pastoral leadership who collaboratively works with the Saint Pius X community to implement the goal of sustainability and growth.

We present these proposals as a means to find an off-ramp to this entire matter.

Respectfully submitted,