

## CANON LAW SERVICES, LLC

500 N. Rainbow Boulevard, Suite 300

Las Vegas, NV 89107

Telephone – 702.221.1989 \* Facsimile – 702.866.9868

Email: [robert@canonlaw.us](mailto:robert@canonlaw.us) \* [mauro@canonlaw.us](mailto:mauro@canonlaw.us) \* Website: [www.canonlaw.us](http://www.canonlaw.us)

**Robert J.B. Flummerfelt, J.C.L., Esq.**

**Mauro Visigalli, Adv. Rot., J.D.**

October 8, 2024

Most Reverend William E. Lori, *Archbishop*  
Archdiocese of Baltimore  
320 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

*Object:* St. Pius X Parish in Baltimore; *Remonstratio* against the Parish Merger

Dear Archbishop Lori,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

We hope this correspondence finds you well. On August 27, 2024, we wrote to Your Excellency and provided numerous mandates signed by some ‘*Christifideles*’ of the **St. Pius X Parish** in Baltimore, who asked us to defend their rights as parishioners against your *decree* merging the mentioned church with the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen Parish, effective December 1, 2024. Please note that, while in your prior communications you kindly granted the term of October 11<sup>th</sup> for submitting the ‘*remonstratio*’, we remain in full observance of the term indicated by can.1734 C.I.C. In the meantime, we know that the parishioners asked the Archdiocese for a meeting, and we sincerely hope that a mediation can be conducted, according to can.1733 as such a requested meeting is appropriate consistent with the letter and spirit of the law and also opportune at this point in time.

We briefly anticipate in this document, which is to be intended as a formal petition for revocation and/or emendation regarding St. Pius X, the parishioners’ arguments that are not

simply based – as you will see – on their ‘*desiderata*’, but are supported by a complete series of documents which we have attached hereto, demonstrating that:

- I. Although the Decree of September 25, 2024, focuses on the numeric analysis of attendance and operating funds over the past twenty (20) years, the conclusory summary of the twenty (20) years does not paint an accurate portrait of the parish. In fact, in 2009, the parish raised \$2.3 million to modernize its sanctuary, move the altar to be closer to the congregation, and center the celebration of the Eucharist in the sanctuary. The ability to raise these funds and modernize the church building demonstrate the lively and joyful spirit of the parish.
- II. There have been multiple external circumstances for declining attendance in recent years over which parishioners had no control and which can be reversed. First, the 2016 merging of St. Pius X Parish with St. Mary of the Assumption, a parish in a non-Catholic area of Baltimore City that was then already in a difficult situation, had a negative impact on St. Pius X. Between 2004 and 2016, Sunday Mass attendance at St. Pius X averaged 644 persons, and had an average offertory collection of US\$11,715, weekly. Between 2017 and June of this year, average weekly Mass attendance was 297 persons, and the offertory average was US\$7,528 weekly (see *Exhibit 1*). Second, in 2017 and 2019, pastors ended two (2) normally scheduled weekly Masses, causing a reduction in attendance: the Saturday afternoon 4 p.m. Mass and the Sunday afternoon 5 p.m. Mass. By 2019, St. Pius X Church had only two (2) Sunday Masses (down from 6 in 2009) and provided Confession only once a month on Friday mornings. Finally, Mass attendance was affected by the COVID Pandemic from 2020 through 2021, during which churches of all denominations lost attendance.
- III. The parish has an evangelization potential, a vibrant sacramental life, and brilliant social and environmental ministries (see *Exhibit 2*).
- IV. The St. Pius X Parish debts can easily be paid by selling the parish school, and a material surplus would remain for utilization by the parish to rebuild the parishioner base and become self-sustaining, through evangelizing and ministering to the surrounding Community.

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Let us, incidentally, mention the parishioners' sincere concern that since the end of the COVID Pandemic in 2021, their pastor has taken no action that would encourage absent parishioners to return to active worship, thereby ignoring their concerns regarding protecting and preserving their Parish: please note that this important remark is made considering the parishioners' rights under canon 212, §3<sup>1</sup>, without disturbing in any way their acknowledgement of your *'potestas regendi'*.

They firmly believe that you – as a very good “*Apostolorum Successor*” – are more than eager “*to encourage the lay faithful to participate in the life of the Church, making every effort to enlist their much-needed collaboration,*” acquiring “*an overview of the situation and the needs of that portion of the People of God entrusted*” to you.<sup>2</sup> So please consider this “*remonstratio*” as a petition from faithful members of your flock rather than as a complaint.

In consideration of the aforementioned points, the application of the plan, “*Seek the City*,” sounds unpleasant in name when applied to a Parish Community that lives in an area of the county, not the City, which is growing, not dying. These facts are certainly known by the Archdiocese because a letter was recently sent by the Parish lay leaders to the Archdiocesan “*Seek the City*” team between the preliminary and final church closing plans (*Exhibit 3*). This letter describes how viable St. Pius X is as a Parish and would be even more so if the assigned Pastor was committed to its growth. Unfortunately, this did not happen over the past three (3) years.

We are not pointing fingers against Fr. José Opalda who, in addition to being Pastor of two (2) churches, has important tasks in the Tribunal, such as being Archdiocesan Judicial Vicar. We actually believe that he does what he can, but all these obligations are preventing

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<sup>1</sup> “§3. According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, **they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful**, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.” (emphasis added) [Code of Canon Law - Book II - The People of God - Part I. \(Cann. 208-329\) \(vatican.va\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores*, February 22, 2004, n.160.

him from adequately taking care of St. Pius X Parish and respecting the perspectives of those faithful represented herein.

The situation worsened after “*Seek the City*” was announced, according to Parish Council members, because Fr. Opalda would not consider beginning a new ministry, even when it did not include Parish funds, because he wanted to “wait and see” what happened with the Archdiocesan plan. Fr. Opalda’s hands-off approach to pastoring is also indicated in a FY2022 financial audit of the parish, which notes instances when the pastor did not “ensure proper oversight and monitoring of Parish expenses” (see *Exhibit 4*, pp. 4-6).

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With this petition, we are addressing Your Excellency in your role as Pastor of the Baltimore Archdiocese and as a sign of unity in this particular Church. We do not doubt your best intentions, but even if your *decree* does not entail a church closure, its effects will not be dissimilar and will even be effectively worse than a church closure, since the inactivity of a church is always the first step before its reduction to profane use. Some Parishioners will simply adapt themselves to the new parish. Most St. Pius X Parishioners, however, will attend churches other than the Cathedral based on an internal survey conducted by Lay Ministry Leaders after the merger and closing was announced. Other parishioners may simply leave the Church altogether because of their disappointment and feelings of being overlooked, under-respected, and of having their perspectives ignored when compared with those members of the Archdiocese who *retained* their parishes. The operations of merging parishes are always finalized to cut fees and expenses and not to increase participation, so the closed churches—having lost their communities—will simply be kept open for some time to ensure they do not raise people’s animosity and will later be closed and sold based on new data demonstrating that a non-functioning church does not generate income, but only costs; it is a defeat, not a renewal plan! This is unfortunately the inevitable future result if the intent of the impugned *decree* is allowed to be implemented.

Let us highlight some elements to be considered in the administrative decision of this matter:

1. The first concern arises from a strong juridical value and pertains to the **preservation of the community**. This is a very important point, never ignored in Vatican jurisprudence. We all know that the People of God are similar all over the world, but we also know – as strongly recalled by the Synod – that such People are comprised of many smaller Christian Communities, not always interchangeable. Moving people from one church to another like postal packages is not a good solution for financial problems. The risk is to aggravate such problems because closing a church inevitably means losing parishioners who will abandon the Church because they feel abandoned by their Bishop.<sup>3</sup>
2. We already mentioned the loss of **attendance** (the universal Church is suffering the same) and its causes in this specific case, but the plan to merge St. Pius X with Mary Our Queen Cathedral can only aggravate this situation.
3. Additionally, the planned reduction **creates divisions** in a currently cohesive Archdiocesan Community and stokes unhealthy rivalries between different church

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<sup>3</sup> Let us read the following statement of Victoria Somogyi, Director of the documentary “Foreclosing on Faith” (Hungary, 2017): *“Community building forces are important to protect in today’s fragile world. When more and more people are getting lonely and isolated, local communities offer a safe-haven and comfort for many people. One example of community building forces is churches. For ethnic communities in the process of settling down in the United States, these centers have played an essential role in history. But over past decades, a very destructive and accelerating process has been taking place in the Catholic Church: the closing of these important places—the parishes. With Jeff Mac Intyre, I set out on this journey in 2014 to uncover the reasons behind this disturbing phenomenon and share my findings in a documentary. As a Hungarian journalist, I have spent a month every year in USA since 2006 visiting Hungarian communities, making interviews, trying to understand how these communities live, how they conserve their homeland’s historical and cultural heritage and identity, their ties to it, and what role faith plays in it. Destroying a home—a spiritual one in the case of these faith communities—causes an enormous shock, inflicting a huge and inestimable crisis on people at many levels, which cannot be underestimated when such decisions are made by the responsible. I wanted to analyze how communities react to these shock waves, and what strategies they apply in response. What interested me most was what those factors are that enable an individual or, in this case a small, seemingly powerless community to come up with a winning strategy to bring them out of a desperate and an extremely disadvantageous, if not life-threatening, situation. I talk about Catholic communities only because I know them best. We can substitute them with any other religious or non-religious communities. The focus is not on a particular religion but on strategies and survival techniques for small communities. Following my mother’s advice, “If you can’t build, don’t destroy”, my intention was to give a 360-degree picture of the players involved in such situations. If they chose not to take part, that was their decision; opportunity was given to everyone. With this documentary, my intention was to open and facilitate a dialogue between the parties to arrive at a win-win decision. Returning from a shoot, on a Sunday, on the highway between Dayton and Cleveland, Ohio, we stopped for lunch at a Mexican restaurant. A complete stranger of Hispanic origin, whom we opened the door for, letting him in before us, paid our check and left a note saying: “Pass it on.” Apart from showing the plight, the suffering of these faith-based groups, my goal is also to pass on to the viewer the generosity and the immense richness of these small, endangered communities and to pass on hope to these afflicted groups.” Cf. [foreclosingonfaith.org](http://foreclosingonfaith.org)*

communities. In this specific case, we note that the Cathedral is not a welcoming physical space for weekly worship for parishioners who are used to a smaller, intimate setting. The Sanctuary is large, cold, and, as one parishioner noted, “you need opera glasses to see what is happening on the altar.” Although Fr. Louis Bianco, the Cathedral Rector, has pledged to accommodate liturgical ministers, parishioners from St. Pius X who met with him recently realized there would be little room for additional Lectors and no ability to accommodate Extraordinary Ministers (due to the number of priests who attend at Cathedral services). Because of the acoustical style of the Cathedral, there would also be an inability to accommodate the much-beloved St. Pius X Contemporary Choir.

4. And the last—but not least important—point we note is that keeping unused buildings does not cut costs but **increases them for the new Parish**. It is easy to understand that the definitive closure of St. Pius X is only being delayed, and this merger is only the first step to dismiss the “secondary” church based on a future report that will simply demonstrate what can be logically previewed to this point: maintaining a diminished church is a useless cost and even more unpleasant for the “merged Parish.”

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Your Excellency, please forgive our frankness when we say that we have managed too many similar cases to ignore that all these “visions” of a “*fully alive and evangelizing Church*”<sup>4</sup> are sadly, and practically, just a sugarcoating of the Church’s retreat: the St. Pius X buildings will be gradually dismissed and sold to the best suitor after the former parishioners have become accustomed to a new assignment. However, for them, this will mean joining a different community that, in their eyes, will appear as speciously privileged. Thus, it is something harmful to the life of faith of the members of the Community.

The care for souls is to be the driving force behind any decision, even the one to extinguish a Parish, and the decision should include more than debatable demographic forecasts and financial resources: you are an Apostle, not just a manager, and your decisions

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<sup>4</sup> Letter to Parish of September 28, 2024.

should be based on what is best in the interest of souls to whom the Church ministers. This is exactly what the jurisprudence of the Apostolic Signatura teaches, and we are sure that this is exactly what you are searching for. However, we believe that you are searching for this through the wrong method.

A parish is a vital part of a person's religious life and formation: it is the place where the individual believer encounters the Church and her saving mission. *“It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love.”*<sup>4</sup>

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## **Conclusions**

In the above-mentioned letter requesting mediation, the St. Pius X Parishioners asked you for more time; more time (and frankly a Pastor who reflects AND supports their intentions to preserve their Parish) to concretely show that they can grow the Parish and resolve all the financial matters. Based on a professional engineer's assessment, the St. Pius X Church building has been well maintained (*Exhibit 5*). The only St. Pius X debt is the result of over ten (10) years of Parish support for the school plus costs incurred after the school closed in 2021 due, in part, to the Pastor's decision to create Parish offices in the school building (*Exhibit 6*). But, once that building is sold, St. Pius X would be free of debt. Please consider that the Parish is located about 6-7 acres of land just inside Baltimore County, near the city-county line, and is prime real estate (*Exhibits 7*).

We want to close this document with a reflection and some words of hope in these troubled times for the Church: plans of reduction are taking the wind out of Churches' sails everywhere, but we sincerely hope that brave bishops can reverse this sad inclination and make concrete God's words addressed to St. Francis of Assisi: *“Go Francis, and repair my Church.”*

For all the above reasons, *in iure et in facto*, thoughtfully evaluated and not overlooking the reasons that could have brought the Archdiocese to this sad decision, we are formally asking you to undo your *decree* published on September 29, 2024, merging the St. Pius X Parish in Baltimore into the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, effective December 1, 2024.

Respectfully yours,



Robert J. B. Flummerfelt



Mauro Visigalli, Adv.

# **EXHIBIT 1**

Year	Avg Weekly Mass Attendance	Annualized Change In Avg Attendance	Pastor/PLD	Avg Weekly Offertory	Annualized Change in Avg Offertory	Parish Events Affecting Attendance
2004-2006 <sup>1</sup>	905	n/a	Pastoral Life Director (PLD): Carol Pacione <sup>2</sup>	\$11,910	n/a	<b>2004:</b> Fr. Sam Lupico was assigned to SPX as a sacramental minister; At this time <b>SPX had 6 masses:</b> Saturday 4:30 pm, Sunday 8 am; 9:30 am in the Church; a Family Mass at 9:30 in the Parish Hall; an 11 am in the Church; and a Youth Mass at 5 pm with modern Christian/Catholic music. Most weekends, Fr. Hank Hilton (SJ) <sup>3</sup> presided over 2 masses; Fr. Lou Reitz <sup>4</sup> presided over 2; and Fr. Sam Lupico presided over 2.
2007-2009	830	(75)	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$11,436	(\$474)	<b>Between 2007 and 2008, SPX Parishioners</b> donated <b>\$2.3 million</b> for Church renovations; \$1.8 million was spent on renovating the Church Sanctuary and bringing the building up to code; the balance was spent on renovating the Parish Hall (renamed Genesis Hall) into meeting and gathering space and on some renovations to the school. <b>2009:</b> Sanctuary reopened and the 9:30 Family Mass in Parish Hall had to be eliminated due to the parish hall renovations (and fire codes), which reduced attendance.

<b>2010</b>	924	<b>94</b>	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$10,982	(\$454)	<b>2010:</b> Following an archdiocesan study of parish school enrollment in Baltimore City, 13 of 64 Archdiocesan schools were closed. SPX School Board considers making the school Montessori.
<b>2011</b>	623	<b>(301)</b>	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$12,828	\$1,846	<b>2011:</b> SPX School began transition to become a Montessori School.5 <b>2011:</b> Fr. Hank Hilton, SJ, moved from Baltimore to preside over a parish in New Jersey and SPX lost a weekly Sunday Mass presider as well as a number of people who liked the Jesuit style. PLD Carol Pacione and staff recruited priests to say Sunday Mass: Fr. Martin Burnham, Fr. Ray Chase, Fr. Matt Beuning, and occasionally Msgr. Rick Hilgartner, as well as others.
<b>2012</b>	658	<b>35</b>	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$11,662	(\$1,166)	
<b>2013</b>	713	<b>55</b>	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$12,386	\$724	2013: Newly Ordained Deacon Patrick Wood assigned to SPX
<b>2014</b>	711	<b>(2)</b>	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$11,698	(\$688)	
<b>2015</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>(17)</b>	PLD: Carol Pacione	\$10,821	(\$877)	

2016	n/a	n/a	Administrator/Pastor: Fr. Marty Nocchi	\$10,314	(\$507)	<p><b>January 2016:</b> After 13 years as PLD, Carol Pacione retired and Fr. Marty Nocchi, pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption's (SMG), in Baltimore City, was named administrator of SPX. <b>June 2016:</b> Archdiocese combined SPX and SMG into its new model of a "Pastorate" and assigned Fr. Nocchi as Pastor and Fr. Sam Young as Associate Pastor. Fr. Lou Reitz, who had resided in the SPX Rectory for 38 years (since 1978), retired. Fr. Nocchi and staff planned multiple joint potluck dinners to encourage parishioners from both parishes to get to know each other.</p>
2017 <sup>7</sup>	502	(96)	Pastor: Fr. Marty Nocchi	\$11,021	\$707	<p><b>2017 and 2018:</b> Fr. Nocchi worked to develop a joint pastoral council between the two churches; To accommodate a mass schedule for a single priest serving two churches, mass schedules at both were re-arranged and SPX ended its Saturday 4 pm Mass, hoping parishioners would attend the 4 pm Mass at SMG (very few did). The elimination of the Saturday night Mass resulted in more attendance loss; in addition, <b>SPX no longer held Confession and offered only the Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30am, and 5 pm masses (3 total).</b></p>

<b>2018</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>(99)</b>	Pastor: Fr. Marty Nocchi	\$10,501	<b>(\$520)</b>	Fr. Nocchi became sick in 2018 from the stress of pastoring two churches that had different populations and traditions; he took a leave of absence starting Feb 10, 2019 <sup>8</sup>
<b>2019</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>(63)</b>	Pastor: Fr. Nocchi until 3/31 Pastor: Fr. Jojo Opalda began 4/14/2019	\$7,229	<b>(\$3,272)</b>	During Fr. Opalda's first year as pastor, many long-time parishioners left SPX because of his style of ministry, which was much more conservative than what parishioners had been used to since the 1970s. The 5 pm Sunday Youth Mass was eliminated.
<b>2020</b>	<b>No Data (COVID Restrictions)</b>			\$6,504	<b>(\$725)</b>	
<b>2021</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>(91)</b>	Pastor: Fr. Jojo Opalda	\$6,620	\$116	June 2021: St. Pius X School closed permanently and the property advertised for lease. COVID Restrictions continued to limit attendance at Mass. Parish leadership made no effort to contact parishioners to encourage their return or to inquire how they were doing.
<b>2022</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>54</b>	Pastor: Fr. Jojo Opalda	\$6,264	<b>(\$356)</b>	
<b>2023</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>7</b>	Pastor: Fr. Jojo Opalda	\$6,170	<b>(\$94)</b>	FY 2022 Archdiocesan Audit indicates a lack of pastor oversight and engagement over Parish finances between FY 2017 and FY 2022. <sup>9</sup>

<b>2024 through July</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>43</b>	Pastor: Fr. Jojo Opalda	\$5,920	<b>(\$250)</b>	<b>5-Year Avg Mass Attendance 2019 - 2024 (excluding 2020 due to Covid): 238</b>
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- <sup>1</sup> Attendance and Offeratory information for 2006 through 2015 obtained from Archdiocese of Baltimore, Office of Pastoral Planning, "Parish Planning Data - Executive Summary," Office of Pastoral Planning, April 6, 2016; based on data provided in the Annual Consolidated Report (ACR).
- <sup>2</sup> Cardinal Keeler created this lay administrative position to enable priests to devote more time to pastoral ministry rather than administration duties; Carol Pacione became PLD at SPX in 2002. During her tenure, parish finances were stable and the parish flourished.
- <sup>3</sup> Fr. Hank Hilton taught Economics at Loyola University but wanted to serve in a Parish. While Fr. Tom Gouleke was still pastor, Fr. Hilton offered to preside over two masses each weekend, three weekends each month. He became an integral part of Parish life during his tenure through 2011.
- <sup>4</sup> Fr. Lou Reitz served as provincial treasurer for the Sulpician Fathers in the United States during the time he resided in the SPX Rectory (where for many years, he was the only resident). He also served as chaplain to the Baltimore Fire Department and was an active member of the United States Power Squadron, a nonprofit all-volunteer national boating fraternity dedicated to promoting safe boating by educating the public and providing advanced education to its members. As Assisting Clergy, Fr. Reitz was integral to the Sacramental life of the parish but was not involved in administration or programming.
- <sup>5</sup> SPX School Board hoped that as the only Montessori school in the Archdiocese the school would attract more pupils.
- <sup>6</sup> Average Weekly Offertory data from FY 2015 through FY 2024 compiled by Finance Council Chair Francis ("Skip") Falatko.
- <sup>7</sup> 2017-2024 mass attendance data compiled by a parishioner who went through every St. Pius X online bulletin from 2017 through 2024 (see Sheet 1 of this document, "Weekly Mass Attendance").
- <sup>8</sup> Fr. Marty Nocchi, Letter to Parishioners, published in Pastorate Bulletin and read at all Masses, February, 19, 2019.
- <sup>9</sup> Archdiocese of Baltimore, Internal Audit Report, St. Pius X Roman Catholic Congregation, Incorporated, Issued June 28, 2023.

# **EXHIBIT 2**

# ST. PIUS X PARISH

## Evangelization Potential, Sacramental Life, and Social Action Ministries

### EVANGELIZATION POTENTIAL

#### 1. Visible and Welcoming from a Major Thoroughfare – STC Score: 4

St. Pius X is located at 6428 York Road in Baltimore County and, since it is on a small hill slightly elevated from the road, it is highly visible. York Road is one of Baltimore’s major thoroughfares running North and South through the middle of Baltimore City and Baltimore County up to the Pennsylvania line, which thousands of cars drive on daily.

If St. Pius X remains closed because of the Seek the City to Come initiative, there will no longer be a Catholic Church building fronting the Greenmount/York Road corridor from North Avenue in Baltimore City to Cockeysville in Baltimore County (approximately 12 miles). In fact, there will no longer be a Catholic Church fronting this major thoroughfare from North Ave. to the Pennsylvania line (30 miles).<sup>1</sup>

However, there will be 1 Lutheran church; 1 Methodist church; 2 Episcopal churches; 2 Presbyterian churches; 4 Baptist churches; and 9 other nondenominational churches on York Road between Towson in Baltimore County and North Avenue in Baltimore City. (see Exhibit A).

#### 2. Proximity to Transit/Walkability – STC Score: 3

The Maryland Transit Administration’s Red Line runs north and South on York Road between downtown Baltimore City and a transit hub in Lutherville. Bus stops north and south are within a 2–4-minute walk of St. Pius X. On this score, St. Pius X rated higher than ten of the other 18 churches listed in the North Region Data Toolkit, including Cathedral of Mary Our Queen (which scored 2).<sup>2</sup>

**3. Area Density (Households within a 10-minute walk): 1,839**

**4. Area Median Age (within a 10-minute walk): 38.2 years old**

**5. Area Median Household Income (within a 10-minute walk): \$109,649**

**6. Median Home Value: \$391,406**

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<sup>1</sup> Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, located at 100 Ware Ave., Towson, and St. Joseph Catholic Church, located at 100 Church Lane, Cockeysville, are close by but do not have a presence on York Rd.

<sup>2</sup> Seek the City, Draft Model Process, Session 2, “North Region Toolkit,” pages 6-7; Seek the City to Come, “Parish Information Package – St. Pius X,” page 11.

## **7. Black Population in Parish Boundary: 20%**

Based on these Seek the City's statistics and its maps, St. Pius X lies within the wealthiest and most densely Catholic areas within the Seek the City boundaries. The neighborhoods surrounding the Church tend to be made up of young families because of the proximity to two of Baltimore County's best public Elementary Schools (Stoneleigh Elementary School and Roger's Forge Elementary School). The parish's median of \$109,649 is double that of the Baltimore City average of \$55,800.<sup>3</sup>

St. Pius X is unlike many of the much older churches in Baltimore City where Catholics no longer live near their churches but live further away in the Baltimore County suburbs. With good leadership, St. Pius X, located in Baltimore County in a potential growth area, could bring back area Catholics and reach new people, given the chance to make a concerted dedicated outreach in this area and with the help of the Archdiocese.

## **8. Area Catholicity (Registered parishioners within 10-minute walk): 927**

According to Seek the City's "North Region Data Toolkit"<sup>4</sup> St. Pius X had more registered Catholics within a 10-minute walk than any other church in the North Region (including Cathedral of Mary our Queen, which had only 354 registered Catholics in the same 10-minute walk).

### ***Why Hasn't St. Pius X Conducted Outreach in Recent Years?***

The Lay Leadership of St. Pius X first learned that the Archdiocese had an Office for Evangelization when they met with Bishop Bruce Lewandowski and Julie St. Croix on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, following the public hearings on Seek the City's Final Plan. Neither of our pastors had ever mentioned that this was a resource the lay leadership should examine.

During the first three years after St. Pius X was combined with St. Mary of the Assumption under one pastor (2016-2018), Pastor Fr. Marty Nocchi had to focus his energies on bringing the two parishes—which were very different in every way—together. He then became very sick in 2019 as a result, taking first a sick leave of absence, then resigning from being Pastor.<sup>5</sup>

In April 2019, Fr. Jojo Opalda was named Pastor of the two churches and encountered many of the same issues that Fr. Nocchi had. In addition, Fr. Opalda had a full-time job on the Archdiocese Tribunal, becoming Judicial Vicar in 2022. His work responsibilities for the Archdiocese left him little time to initiate new programs or lead us in outreach to the surrounding area.

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<sup>3</sup> Seek the City to Come, "Parish Information Package – St. Pius X," page 11.

<sup>4</sup> Seek the City to Come, Draft Model Process, Session 2, "North Region Toolkit," pages 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Fr. Marty Nocchi, Letter to Parishioners, published in Pastorate Bulletin and read at all Masses, February, 19, 2019.

## SACRAMENTAL LIFE

The data on Sacramental Life for all parishes, varies year to year and has fluctuated worse since the COVID pandemic. The statistics given in the Decree are from 2023, but in 2022, according to Seek the City data published in the Parish Information Package (page 13), St. Pius X conducted:

- 35 baptisms
- 18 First Eucharist and First Confessions
- 22 Confirmations
- 5 weddings
- 14 funerals

**Ratio of Baptisms to Funerals: 2.5**

**Five-Year Average Sunday Mass Attendance** (excluding 2020 when all churches were affected by COVID Pandemic): **238**

### *Reasons for Decline in Mass Attendance*

“St. Pius X Parish Mass Attendance and History 2017-2024” provides historical information that affected attendance decline, particularly since 2017. Some of that decline can be attributed to the reduced number of masses between 2011 and 2023 (from seven masses in 2006 down to two masses in 2019). Every time a mass time changed or was eliminated, attendance declined. But, as noted above and on the spreadsheet, the inability to attract new members can also be attributed to the formation of the pastorate with St. Mary’s of the Assumption in northern Baltimore City in 2017, because the two parishes were incompatible.

Pastors Fr. Mary Nocchi (2017-2019) and Fr. Jojo Opalda (2019-present) struggled to balance the needs and requirements of both churches. St. Mary’s, about 1 mile south of St. Pius X, is in an area of Baltimore City that no longer has a large Catholic presence (only 126 registered parishioners within a 10-minute walk); while St. Pius X is in Baltimore County with almost a thousand registered Catholics within a 10-minute walk.

Under Pastoral Life Director Carol Pacione (2002-2015), SPX Parish had a full-time Liturgist, Youth Minister, and Adult Minister. All those positions went unfilled after 2018. Vital spiritual programs dwindled to become almost non-existent. Any programs that were established after Ms. Pacione left (prayer ministries, social/environmental ministries, liturgical ministries) were all begun and run by lay members.

**Prayer Ministries:** SPX has the following prayer ministries.

- Caritas Dei – Members pray weekly, either in person as a group or at home privately, for special intentions and needs requested by parishioners in our Prayer Book.
- Circle of Wisdom – This prayer group meets weekly to pray together and reflect on the daily Gospel readings.
- Rosary – At 10 am each Sunday before the 10:30 am Mass, the rosary is led by volunteers and prayed by many parishioners.
- Stations of the Cross – Liturgical ministers lead the Stations each Friday in Lent for numerous parishioners.

### **Liturgical Ministries**

Lectors: 15

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist: 14

Ushers: 6

Arimathean Ministry to serve at Funeral Masses: 3

**Music Ministry:** Our music director and choir receive wonderful accolades regularly from visiting priests. The music is vibrant, soulful and often brings tears to the eyes of our parishioners. Our entire congregation sings joyfully at all masses.

## **SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRIES**

### **SPX Is a Charitable, Generous Community**

**The Knights of Columbus, Notre Dame Council 2901, is active at St. Pius X**

- Although many of its 190 members have moved outside the Council area, they remain active in Notre Dame Council 2901 activities; 24 members are specifically involved in all social and liturgical activities at St. Pius X Parish.
- Donations:
  - After the Notre Dame Council 2901 building was sold in 2023, the Council donated \$250,000 to five Catholic High Schools: Mercy High School, Archbishop Curley High School, Mt. Carmel High School, Catholic High School, and Mt. St. Joseph High School.
  - Donation to St. Elizabeth's School: \$500
  - Donation to Deacon Franz Belleza upon his ordination as Deacon in 2023, to thank him for the time he devoted to our parish while he was a seminarian: \$500.
  - Donation to Fr. Joseph Simmons: \$500 annually for his work as chaplain.
  - Donation to St. Pius X: \$500 for flowers and grounds beautification.
  - Knights bought a new chalice for St. Pius X upon the request of Pastor Opalda: \$100
- Members of the council donates countless hours to the St. Pius X Christmas tree sale each year, which raised about \$60,000 annually for the Parish.

- Members collect donations for about 100 food baskets every Christmas Season for families in need around Baltimore, in addition to collecting winter coats for a nonprofit to provide to children in need.

**Our Daily Bread:** St. Pius X has been supporting the Archdiocesan-run soup kitchen and resource center for the homeless for 40 years.

**Pregnancy Center North:** The Knights of Columbus and the St. Pius X Social Action Committee have supported this local organization for many years in its work helping pregnant, single mothers.

**GEDCO<sup>6</sup>:** St. Pius X parishioners have been donating food to GEDCO’s food pantry in northern Baltimore City (about 2 miles south of St. Pius X Church) for over 20 years. The average bi-weekly delivery consists of at least 20 bags of food. The parish food donation is supplemented with fresh vegetables and fruit grown in St. Pius’s “Giving Garden,” staffed by volunteers and funded by local sponsors including the Knights of Columbus.

**Giving Tree:** For at least 20 years, each Christmas, the Social Action Committee has sponsored a Giving Tree that collects gift cards, food, toys, and clothing for approximately 50 needy families in Baltimore City.

**Grateful Hearts Fund:** This fund began about 10 years ago to raise money for families and individuals in our community who suddenly found themselves without the resources for an emergency need: tires for a car; the loss of belongings after a fire, etc. Since 2022, the SPX Poor Box has been dedicated twice a year (Christmas and Easter) for this fund. In that time, the fund raised almost \$16,000 and provided 53 families with gift cards for food at local grocery stores.

## **SPX Is an Environmental Steward Caring for God’s Creation**

In 2023, Catholic Charities of Maryland published a *Social Justice Toolkit* to highlight the social justice principles that are at the core of its mission. In the “Toolkit” Catholic Charities of Maryland recognized St. Pius X as an example of the principle “Care for Creation” due to its work as an environmental steward with the following programs that were begun and fostered by parishioners.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Giving Garden***

The St. Pius X Giving Garden was created five years ago on parish property to supply fresh fruit and vegetables to local food pantries. In 2023, 25 dedicated volunteers, ages 7 to 77, grew, packed, and delivered 1,300 pounds of produce to the Associated Churches of Towson Assistance Center (ACTC) and GEDCO Cares.

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<sup>6</sup> The Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation (GEDCO) was founded in 1991, bringing together 7 churches of different denominations (including St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church) in northern Baltimore City to provide an array of social services to the area’s residents. It currently has 55 member organizations.

<sup>7</sup> <https://cc-md.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Social-Justice-Toolkit-Single-Pages012524.pdf>

### ***Saint Francis Bioretention Garden***

St. Pius X School, Church and Rectory were built on a steep hill with a stream running underground through the property. To filter the stormwater that runs off the property, volunteers built a bio-retention facility/garden in 2016 to prevent pollutants from flowing into Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay. During torrential downpours, the garden can store and filter more than 20,000 gallons of water. The garden is full of native plants and flowers that provide a home for birds, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. Parishioners and neighbors volunteer regularly to maintain the garden. Over the years, benches and birdbaths have been added to provide a peaceful, prayerful greenspace for parishioners and the local community. This garden was financially supported by Blue Water Baltimore and given a Deed of Declaration and Easement by Baltimore County.

In August 2024, the Saint Francis Bioretention Garden won the Green Towson Alliance annual Native Garden Contest, in the “Seeds of Change” category, for its positive impact on the local ecosystem and the local community.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)***

For over ten years, SPX has participated as a drop off/pickup center for fresh produce from One Straw Farm. Parishioners and local community members purchase shares of fresh produce weekly during the growing season. This project supports a local Baltimore County farm, provides members with fresh healthy produce, and helps reduce carbon emissions by reducing transportation. One Straw Farm donates a bag of produce to food pantries for every 10 bags purchased each week, and any produce that is not picked up is given to the Giving Garden for its weekly donation to GEDCO Cares.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the 1970s, parishioners of St. Pius X have practiced the principle first advocated by our Patron Saint, Pope Pius X: *participato actiosa* (active participation of the faithful), later reaffirmed by Vatican II teachings. We ask for the chance to continue this practice, evangelize to the church’s local community, and bring the Good News of the Eucharist to more people in our area.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nativegardencontest.com/2024-contest>).

# **EXHIBIT 3**

**The Lay Ministry Leaders of St. Pius X Parish**  
**6428 York Road**  
**Baltimore, MD 21212**

April 30, 2024

The Most Reverend Bruce Lewandowski  
Ms Geri Royale Byrd  
Seek the City to Come

Dear Bishop Bruce and Ms Byrd,

A great many parishioners at St. Pius X are represented by the signees of this letter, who themselves are leaders of the many ministries active in our Parish. This letter provides additional information about St. Pius X (SPX) in support of the remarks made by our Parish representatives at the Seek the City Public Comment Sessions on April 25 and April 30.

We would first like to say that we understand and support the overall goals of Seek the City. We are particularly supportive of the vision to bring ministries closer to the people they serve throughout the Baltimore City area. We appreciate all the hard work that has gone into the numerous listening sessions and envisioning meetings over the past two years. We understand that there will need to be changes to how SPX operates. And, we want to be partners with Bishop Bruce, the Seek the City team, and the Archdiocese in creating the “City to Come” in Baltimore.

In this letter, we hope to show you why SPX, if merged with Immaculate Heart of Mary, would be a strong partner as a worship and ministry site.

Beginning in the 1970s, the parishioners of St. Pius X were encouraged to become lay leaders of their parish. Lay leadership became more important after 2003, the last time SPX had a full-time priest assigned to minister to it. Over the past 20 years, the laity of SPX have sustained the parish by their involvement in the Liturgical, Sacramental, Musical, Environmental, and Charitable life of the Church, living the principle *participato actiosa* – active participation of the faithful – as advocated by our Patron Saint, Pope Pius X, during his pontificate, and reaffirmed by Vatican II teachings.

A worship site separate from a parish center will need a strong lay leadership to carry out the vision of the City to Come. We believe we have that leadership.

### **St. Pius X Has Potential for Growth**

The neighborhoods surrounding SPX include many young families with children and with a moderately high-income level. According to STC data, SPX has the highest number of registered Catholics within a 10-minute walk compared to Cathedral and IHM, indicating great growth potential:

- SPX - 927
- IHM - 484
- Cathedral - 354

Yet, unlike Cathedral and IHM, SPX has been without a full-time pastor/pastoral life director since 2016. We have lacked the leadership to reach out to the Catholics in our community.

According to the statistics provided in the toolkit for the North Region, baptisms at St Pius X outpace funerals at the highest ratio of 2.5—another indication of our growth potential.

## **SPX Is a Prayerful, Welcoming Worship Space**

**1. Growth:** We are a growing parish, not failing. Since the Pandemic years, when churches of all denominations lost attendance, our attendance has continued to increase.

### **2. Active Sacramental life (2022 STC Data)**

- 35 baptisms
- 18 First Eucharist and First Confessions
- 22 Confirmations
- 5 weddings
- 14 funerals

In addition, for several years, we have sponsored or hosted 1-3 seminarians each year.

**3. Liturgical Ministry:** We have a very active liturgical ministry, with a well-organized group of lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, and ushers serving at all our Masses. We also have an Arimethenian ministry—trained sacristans who also serve as acolytes for funeral masses.

**4. Music Ministry:** Our music director and choir receive wonderful accolades regularly from our visiting priests. The music is vibrant, soulful and often brings tears to the eyes of our parishioners. Our entire congregation sings joyfully at both masses, led by our music director, choir, and cantors.

**5. Prayer Ministries:** SPX has the following prayer ministries.

- Caritas Dei – Members pray weekly, either in person as a group or at home privately, for special intentions and needs requested by parishioners in our Prayer Book.
- Circle of Wisdom – This prayer group meets weekly to pray together and reflect on the daily Gospel readings.
- Rosary - At 10 am each Sunday before Mass, the rosary is led by volunteers and prayed by many parishioners.
- Stations of the Cross – Liturgical ministers lead the Stations each Friday in Lent for numerous parishioners.

**6. Church Building:** St. Pius X Church was built in 1959 and renovated in 2009 into a bright, modern worship space; including a new sanctuary and chapel.

**7. Accessibility:** SPX is located on York Road just north of the City and south of Towson. We are located on a busy thoroughfare with bus service. We have a large parking lot providing easy access to the church. We are ADA compliant and we have an elevator between our church and our community hall below the church.

A parishioner with MS who walks with difficulty recently compared the accessibility of Cathedral, IHM, and SPX:

*I drove to the Cathedral and then to Immaculate Heart of Mary today. I've been to each many times before, but I looked at them from a different perspective today. And, one thing I noticed is how difficult accessibility is at the Cathedral. Perhaps I wasn't looking in the right places, but I only saw 4 handicapped parking spots in front of the Cathedral and about 6 or so in a side area (where there is also a spot for the archbishop). The Cathedral is not especially user friendly for parking for someone with walking problems, not to mention the distance you need to travel once you are inside. Immaculate Heart of Mary had a good number of spots close to the church entrance. My other thought was of the accessibility of SPX with a large parking lot with one small step to go up to the patio and then a rail to walk toward the church. From my perspective, St. Pius is hands down the better choice.*

**8. Appearance:** The altar and entire church are always beautifully decorated for each liturgical season, including fresh flowers, plants, and other arrangements. The outside is decorated with seasonal wreaths and the overall grounds are well maintained.

**9. Social spaces:** Genesis Hall, below the church, is used as an event and meeting space. It has a fully functional kitchen and a performance stage, which are both heavily used for activities. It is handicap accessible with an elevator. The patio at the main side entrance of the church includes tables and chairs, and the space is used for seasonal gatherings.

**10. Clergy at SPX:** In addition to our Pastor Fr. Jojo, the following clergy have presided over Sunday Masses over the past decade or more and can attest to our uplifting music, ministries, and the active participation of our congregation: Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, Fr. Steven Roth, Fr. Jim Proffit, Fr. Reginald Whitt, Fr. Matt Buening, Fr. Martin Burnham, Fr. Ray Chase.

### **SPX Is a Charitable, Generous Community**

#### **1. The Knights of Columbus, Notre Dame Council 2901:**

- 190 active members; many have moved elsewhere, but remain active; 24 of whom are involved in all social and liturgical activities at St. Pius X Parish.
- Donations:
  - \$250,000 in 2023 to 5 Catholic High Schools (Mercy, ABC, Mt. Carmel, Catholic High, and Mt. St. Joseph) after the council building was sold;
  - St. Elizabeth's School--\$500
  - Deacon Franz Belleza upon his ordination as Deacon in 2023 -\$500
  - Fr. Joseph Simmons - \$500 **annually for his work as chaplain**
  - St. Pius X \$500 for flowers and grounds beautification
  - St. Mary's boiler fund in 2023 - \$2000
  - New chalice for St. Pius X -\$100
- Organizes Trunk or Treat each Halloween for community children
- Works booths at the annual SPX Carnival to raise money for the parish
- Donated countless hours at the SPX Christmas tree sale that annually raises about \$60,000
- Provides a free pancake breakfast at St. Mary's before Lent each year
- Provides 100 food baskets at Christmas to needy families around Baltimore
- Provides soup each Friday during Lent at SPX before Stations of the Cross
- Donated coats to GEDCO Cares for needy children in November 2023

- Assists St. Mary of the Assumption with the Four Frenchmen celebration and French Sailors

**2. Our Daily Bread:** SPX has 40 years of participation in serving those enjoying a meal at ODB. Currently, SPX has 6 volunteers who deliver approximately 35 to 40 casseroles every month to ODB. Several volunteers who have served food at ODB every week for many, many years.

**3. Pregnancy Center North:** This organization is supported by both the Knights of Columbus and the Social Action Committee at SPX by direct monetary contributions as well as with baby items.

**4. School Supplies:** St. Jerome's receives school supplies almost every year from SPX at the start of the school year.

**5. GEDCO:** GEDCO food pantry on Woodbourne Ave. has been the recipient of non-perishable food items for 20 years or more from SPX parishioners. The average bi-weekly delivery consists of at least 20 bags of food. The food donation is supplemented by fresh vegetables and fruit grown in SPX's "Giving Garden" staffed by volunteers and funded by sponsors such as local funeral homes, WMAR, and Knights of Columbus. Volunteers also bring overage food from Our Daily Bread to GEDCO food pantry each month.

**6. Giving Tree:** For at least 20 years, each Christmas, the Social Action Committee has sponsored a Giving Tree that collects gift cards, food, toys, and clothing for approximately 50 needy families in Baltimore City.

**7. Grateful Hearts Fund:** This fund began about 10 years ago to raise money for families and individuals in our community who suddenly found themselves without the resources for an emergency need: tires for a car; the loss of belongings after a fire, etc. Since 2022, the SPX Poor Box has been dedicated twice a year (Christmas and Easter) for this fund. In that time, the fund has raised almost \$16,000 provided 53 families with gift cards for food at local grocery stores.

## **SPX Is an Environmental Steward Caring for God's Creation**

St. Pius X was recently recognized as a "Faith Community Spotlight" in the Catholic Charities *Social Justice Tool Kit* as an example of "The Principle Lived Out" for its work as an environmental steward.

### ***Giving Garden:***

Our Giving Garden is located just south of the rectory and has supplied fresh fruit and vegetables to local food pantries for the past 5 years. Last season we donated 1,300 lbs of produce to the pantries at the Associated Churches of Towson Assistance Center (ACTC) and GEDCO Cares in Govans. Twenty-five dedicated volunteers (ages 7 to 77), plant, water, harvest, pack, and deliver every Tues/Thurs, and Saturday morning. "Seed" money is provided by local businesses.

### ***Saint Francis Bio-retention Garden:***

SPX was built on a hill with an underground stream running through the property. To filter the storm water that runs off the property, we built a bio-retention facility/garden to prevent pollutants from flowing into the Inner Harbor and Chesapeake Bay. The garden is full of native

plants and flowers that provide a home for birds, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. Parishioners and neighbors volunteer regularly to maintain the garden. Over the years, benches and birdbaths have been added to provide a peaceful, prayerful greenspace for parishioners and the local community.

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

For over ten years, SPX has participated as a drop off/pickup center for fresh produce from One Straw Farm. Parishioners and local community members purchase shares of fresh produce weekly during the growing season. This project supports a local farm, provides members with fresh healthy produce, and helps reduce carbon emissions by reducing transportation. One Straw Farm donates a bag of produce to food pantries for every 10 bags purchased each week, and any produce that is not picked up is given to the Giving Garden for its weekly donation to GEDCO Cares.

**SPX is Highly Visible**

Thousands of commuters pass by St. Pius X Church as they travel between the City and County on York Road. As explained further below, SPX is a welcoming and accessible church, on a bus line and with easy parking. We also have all the amenities required—including a school, which although closed, is still available.

**Conclusion**

The loss of St. Pius X on the York Road corridor and within an area of almost a thousand registered Catholics would negatively impact the potential for evangelization in the North and Northeast areas of the City.

If St. Pius X is not to remain as a standalone parish, we welcome the opportunity to be a separate worship center aligned with Immaculate Heart of Mary as was proposed in the model prior to the recent announcement. We would also welcome becoming the site of an Hispanic or Filipino ministry, as both are very much needed in this area.

We understand there are many hard decisions to be made in re-imagining the Church and how to best serve the people of Baltimore City. We fully support the vision of Seek the City to expand the Catholic Church’s ministries to those in need in the City. We also prayerfully know and believe we can be part of the solution.

Grace and blessings,

**The St. Pius X Lay Ministry Leaders**

Parish Council  
Margie Brassil

Finance Council  
Skip Falatko

Corporator  
Monica Crusse

Liturgy  
Helen Aberle

Music  
Kevin Cronin

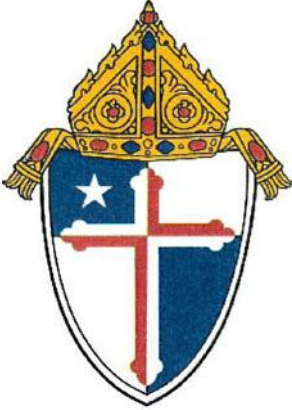
Knights of Columbus  
Barry Schech

Ushers and Corporator  
Robert Stryjewski

Prayer Ministries  
Cherie Weinert

Social Action/Environmental  
Elizabeth Wagner

# **EXHIBIT 4**



**Archdiocese of Baltimore**

**Internal Audit Report**

**St. Pius X Roman  
Catholic Congregation, Incorporated**

**For the twelve months ended June 30, 2022**

Field work Completed: May 18, 2023  
Auditor: Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra, LLC  
Date of Issuance: June 28, 2023



**ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – JUNE 30, 2022  
ST. PIUS X PARISH**

Parish Address: 6428 York Rd. Baltimore, MD 21212	Pastor: Rev. Jose Opalda	Number: 2206	Eastern Vicar: Rev. Msgr. Jay O'Connor
Fiscal Year of Current Audit: June 30, 2022	Fiscal Year of Previous Audit: June 30, 2017	Exit Conference Date: May 24, 2023	
Type of Audit:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Routine <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Pastor/Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Requested By:		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Concerns/Overdue Receivables <input type="checkbox"/> Theft/Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Reporting/Outstanding Receivables		
Significant Findings/Recommendations:	Parish Response to Recommendations:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative Trend in Financial Performance/Significant Past-Due Liabilities</li> <li>• Improper Offertory Count Procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Business Manager and Finance Chair are scheduling a meeting with the Advancement Dept to discuss a Fall Offertory/Stewardship Campaign to increase income. The Parish plans to implement a plan to have the Finance Council approve any expenses over a specific amount.</li> <li>• The Parish plans to implement a new count team consisting of 4 people. We have two of the four committed but searching for the additional two members.</li> </ul>		

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Assets:	@ June 30, 2022	Summary of Operations:	@ June 30, 2022
Cash & Investments	\$ 18,331	Offertory	\$ 325,742
Endowments	16,646	Total Operating Income	537,942
IPLF	40,087	Total Operating Expense	757,333
Liabilities:	@ June 30, 2022	Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(219,390)
Insurance	\$ 37,986	Increase/(decrease) – 1 yr	(86,206)
School Assessment	0	Increase/(decrease) – 3 yr	(203,128)
Cathedraticum	50,755		

**OTHER**

G/L Package: QuickBooks Online	# of Families FY22: 1,763
Payroll Service: UltiPro	Change in # of Families – 2 yrs: +500
Pastoral Council President: Carol Green	Cemetery: No
Finance Committee Chair: Francis Falatko	Current Campaigns: No
Accounting Staff: Sabrina Perdue	Capital Projects: No



**ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE  
COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION – JUNE 30, 2022  
ST. PIUS X PARISH**

Rev. Jose Opalda  
Pastor  
St. Pius X Parish  
6428 York Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21212

During the week of April 24, 2023, representatives of Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra, LLC, in association with the Archdiocese of Baltimore, performed internal auditing procedures on the financial information of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Baltimore, Maryland for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. The internal control policies and the results of the Parish's financial reporting process were compared with the recommended policies of the Archdiocese of Baltimore to determine the level of compliance with these policies. The overall control environment was found to be adequate in most significant areas. The following exceptions were noted during audit fieldwork and based on Archdiocesan guidelines the associated recommendations have been provided for The Parish's consideration.

The results of the audit, as detailed in this report, were discussed with the Pastor and his administrative team during the exit conference on May 18, 2023. Responses to the comments and suggestions for implementation have been provided by the Pastor.

While performing audit fieldwork, it was determined that 13 out of 19 internal control recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2017 audit report were implemented. The internal audit reports are not only intended to determine compliance with Archdiocesan guidelines, but also to identify risks to parishes and to provide recommendations to ensure proper stewardship. The Parish should keep in mind that insurance coverage and related deductibles can be negatively impacted by a lack of proper internal controls.

**Areas of Significant Concern:**

**Negative Trend in Financial Performance/Significant Past-Due Liabilities**

During our review, we determined that the Parish has a significant amount of money that it owes the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Specifically, the Parish owed the following liabilities as of June 30, 2022:

- Cathedraticum \$50,755 (FY22)
- Health & Benefits 21,528 (FY22)
- Prop & Casualty 16,458 (FY22)
- Total \$88,741**

In addition, we are concerned because the Parish has been operating at a deficit for 5 of the past 5 years: FY'22 - (\$219,300); FY'21 - \$(133,184); FY'20 - \$(108,136); FY'19 - \$(16,262); and FY'18 - \$(22,345) **and the Parish has virtually no operating cash.**

Policy states that Parishes should be administered in a manner so that they maintain a Net Surplus (i.e. Total Income greater than Total Expenses within each year; Assets less Liabilities). Policy also states that Cathedraticum tax is to be paid at least quarterly and that any remaining balance due should be paid by August 15th when the Parish's annual financial report is filed.<sup>1</sup>

Recommendation:

The Pastor should continue to work with his Finance Committee, Business Manager and Regional Controller to identify strategies to increase revenue and thoroughly analyze all operating expenses to minimize the operating deficit. Once that has been accomplished, the Pastor should work with his finance team to closely monitor the Parish's financial results and develop a financial plan to return the Parish to a break-even budget.

Parish Response:

The Parish is in the process of moving our offices to the rectory to reduce maintenance costs. The Business Manager and Finance Chair are scheduling a meeting with the Advancement Department to discuss a Fall Offertory/Stewardship Campaign to increase income. The Parish plans to implement a plan to have the Finance Council approve any expenses over a specific amount.

#### Improper Offertory Count Procedures

During our review of the offertory count process, as well as, 50% of the count sheets for the year under review, we determined:

- The Parish has only 2 count teams;
- In 11 instances, offertory was counted by less than 3 individuals; and,
- In 30 instances, offertory was counted by the same individual on consecutive weeks.

Policy states that four counting teams should be used to count funds and all counting teams should consist of at least 3 individuals. Policy also states that the same individuals should not be allowed to count funds on consecutive weeks.<sup>2</sup>

Recommendation:

The Pastor should recruit additional counters to enable to Parish to create 4 count teams that rotate on a weekly basis, with each team consisting of at least three members (all unrelated). In addition, offertory count procedures should be reinforced with all counters. Specifically, individuals should be told that they are not allowed to count money on

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<sup>1</sup> AOB Policy Manual, Division of Fiscal Services, Section 101.1 - Annual Budget

<sup>2</sup> AOB Policy Manual, Division of Fiscal Services, Section 103.3 - Counting Procedures

consecutive weeks and Parish Corporators, Pastoral Council/Finance Committee members and employees, especially those with the ability to input transactions into the general ledger access, should not be allowed to count offertory.

Parish Response:

The Parish plans to implement a new count team consisting of 4 people. We have two of the four committed but searching for the additional two members.

**Areas for Additional Improvement:**

<b>Items Noted</b>	<b>Potential Improvement/Recommendation</b>
<p>1. During our review of the general ledger, we determined that asset and liability accounts are not reconciled. We identified several accounts with unreconciled balances as of June 30, 2022, that need to be researched and corrected including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a/c 1111-06 (balance \$718) – no activity during FY’22;</li> <li>• a/c 1111.07 (balance \$12,260) - no activity during FY’22;</li> <li>• a/c 1111.08 (balance \$-4,044) - no activity during FY’22;</li> <li>• a/c 1130.01 (balance \$1,146) - no activity during FY’22;</li> <li>• a/c 1260 (balance \$23,733) - no activity during FY’22;</li> <li>• a/c 1310-09 (balance \$2,125) - no activity during FY’22;</li> <li>• a/c 2210 (balance \$-6,669) –balance not reconciled;</li> <li>• a/c 2290 (balance \$-132,279) – balance not reconciled;</li> <li>• a/c 2310 (balance \$45,554) – balance not reconciled; and,</li> <li>• a/c 2410 (balance \$14,482) – balance not reconciled.</li> </ul>	<p>The Business Manager should work with the Regional Controller to research these accounts and post the appropriate entries to correct the general ledger. In addition, the Business Manager should reconcile all asset and liability accounts to 3rd party statements (if provided) monthly.</p>
<p>Parish Response: The parish plans to work with our Regional Controller and Auditors to make journal entries to merge/remove the accounts that have no activity and the intercompany accounts.</p>	

<p>2. During our review of the 12 bank statements and bank reconciliations for FY'22 we identified the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pastor does not regularly sign checks. We tested all checks issued in February 2022 and noted that 46% of the checks were signed by the Deacon;</li> <li>• The Parish did not have a copy of the bank signature card; and,</li> <li>• There were 5 checks outstanding longer than six months at fiscal year-end, totaling \$6,055.</li> </ul>	<p>The Pastor should be the primary check signer to ensure proper oversight and monitoring of Parish expenses. In addition, the Parish should contact their bank and request a copy of the bank signature card. Finally, the Business Manager should research the outstanding checks and post the appropriate entries to correct the general ledger.</p>
<p>Parish Response: The parish is implementing a plan/process to ensure the pastor signs more checks. We have contacted PNC to retrieve a copy of the signature cards – waiting for their response. The parish will contact the vendors of the outstanding checks to advise them that new checks will be sent out to them.</p>	
<p>3. During our review of the disbursements for the fiscal year under audit, we identified the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2 instances (electronic payments), totaling \$5,452, the supporting documentation for electronic was not signed by the Pastor to evidence his authorization;</li> <li>• In 2 instances (checks), totaling \$1,515, the supporting documentation was not signed by the Pastor to evidence his authorization; and,</li> <li>• In 1 instance, the Pastor's professional expense reimbursement check was not signed by a Corporator or Finance Committee Chairperson.</li> </ul>	<p>The Pastor should sign the supporting documentation for Parish expenses to evidence his authorization. In addition, checks issued to the Pastor for reimbursements should be signed by a Corporator or the Finance Committee Chairperson.</p>
<p>Parish Response: Parish will ensure the pastor has signed invoices/payment receipts for any electronic payments. Parish will work with Corporators/Councils to advise their signatures on Pastor's checks.</p>	

<p>4. The Parish has a dual signature policy in place requiring checks above \$5,000 to be signed by two authorized check signers. However, we identified 5 instances (totaling \$75,032) where a check exceeded that threshold but was only signed by the Pastor.</p>	<p>The Business Manager should ensure that any checks exceeding the Parish's dual signature policy are signed by two authorized check signers. In addition, during the Pastor's review of the bank statement, he should review canceled check images to ensure that any checks exceeding the dual signature policy were signed by two authorized check signers.</p>
<p>Parish Response: The parish will ask the Finance Council Chair to be a signer on the account, in the event the Pastor is unavailable to dually sign a check with the Deacon.</p>	
<p>5. Based on a review of vendors for 2022, we identified 6 vendors (totaling \$23,669) that should have received an IRS Form 1099 but did not.</p>	<p>Any vendors that are not incorporated and receive more than \$600 during the calendar year should receive an IRS Form 1099. In addition, the Parish should utilize the Expenses by Vendor Summary report to ensure the list of vendors receiving an IRS Form 1099 is complete.</p>
<p>Parish Response: The parish will ensure W9's are sent out annually and make sure that information is updated in QB for correct 1099 reporting.</p>	
<p>6. The Parish owns 5 credit cards (Home Depot, Bank of America, Lowes, Staples, and PNC) that are used by various individuals to purchase materials/services for the Parish. We reviewed 2 credit card statements for each credit card the Parish owns and determined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit limits for the PNC, Home Depot and Lowe's cards should be lowered from \$21,000, \$7,500 and \$8,800, respectively; and,</li> <li>• The business purpose was not noted on credit card receipts.</li> </ul>	<p>The Parish should lower the credit limits on the PNC, Home Depot, and Lowes cards to a more reasonable limit (i.e. \$5,000). In addition, credit card users must ensure that cards are used only for Parish business and that detailed receipts, including the specific business purposes, are attached to the statement for all credit card purchases.</p>
<p>Parish Response: The parish plans to contact the credit card companies and request a reduction in our credit limit.</p>	
<p>7. During our review of the quarterly and annual reports filed with the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we determined that the Parish's FY'22 Annual Financial Report was not approved by the Pastor. The Pastor and Business Manager asserted that the report was reviewed by the Pastor prior to submission.</p>	<p>The Business Manager should ensure the Pastor approves the Annual Financial Report in the AOB Web Reporting System each year.</p>
<p>Parish Response: The Business Manager will ensure she 'checks' the box stating that the annual reports were approved by the Pastor.</p>	

8. The Pastor does not have "Read-Only" access to QuickBooks Online as recommended by the Archdiocese.	The Pastor should have "Read-Only" access to QuickBooks Online in order to assist him in monitoring the Parish's finances.
Parish Response: The Business Manager has sent the invite for 'Read-Only' access to the Pastor.	

# **EXHIBIT 5**

# CONDITION ASSESSMENT EVALUATION ST. PIUS X CATHOLIC CHURCH



**September 19, 2024**

**Prepared By  
Jerome F. Jurick, P.E. (MD Lic. #17339)  
Parishioner of St. Pius X Catholic Church**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The summary of the current physical plant condition of St. Pius X Church, located at 6428 York Road, Baltimore, MD, 21212, is as follows. The physical building was constructed in 1959 and has been well maintained by staff assigned to the church. A major capital renovation of the facility was undertaken in 2008-2009 and included upgrades or replacement to interior finishes, lighting systems, heating plant components, air conditioning systems, restrooms, electrical distribution components, egress signage, fire alarm components, and the addition of an elevator.

### 1. Heating and Cooling Central Plant System:

- The steam boilers, condensate pumping, and controls were replaced with the capital renovation program and are approximately 15 years old.
- The chiller is approximately 25 years old. The unit exhibits signs of corrosion on the exterior cladding, but otherwise appears well maintained.
- The piping system serving the plant is original to the building constructed

### 2. Air Handling Units:

- The two air handling units serving the lower-level parish hall, and the upper-level church are original to the building. The units are well maintained.

### 3. Plumbing System:

- The restrooms within the building were upgraded during the capital renovation.
- ADA bathroom facilities are available within the building

### 4. Electrical Power Distribution System:

- The main incoming power distribution panel was replaced with the major capital renovation.
- The conductor and conduit is likely original to the existing building, except for new devices installed with the capital renovation.

### 5. Lighting System:

- The majority of the lighting system was replaced during the major capital renovation.
- A new lighting control system was installed with the capital renovation and is still in use.

### 6. Roofing and Building Enclosure Systems:

- The building envelop is a stone facade
- The slate roofing system is original to the building and appears to be in good to excellent condition.
- The rain gutters and downspouts need repair or replacement.

### 7. Windows and Doors

- The windows are primarily stained glass with protective exterior clear panels. The frames of the windows have been maintained with new paint as needed.
- The doors are primarily wood doors that have been painted and/or repaired as needed.

### 8. Interior Finishes

- The interior finishes of the church were mostly replaced or refinished during the capital renovation and are in very good condition.

## I. DESCRIPTION AND CONDITION OF PHYSICAL PLANT

### 1.1 Introduction

St Pius X Catholic Church, located at 6428 York Road, Baltimore Maryland, 21212, was constructed and dedicated in 1959. The church is a stone façade with a slate roof, stained glass windows, and wood doors. The facility has been well maintained throughout the life of the church, with specific maintenance and upgrades to many aspects of the facility occurring over the past 20-25 years. The church presents well for a physical facility that is nearly 65 years old. The interior of the church has been renovated and is brightly lit and the indoor ambient temperature is comfortable throughout the four seasons of the mid-Atlantic region.



**Photo 1: Exterior of St. Pius X Catholic Church**



**Photo 2: Interior Photo of St. Pius X Catholic Church**

The landscaping and grounds of St. Pius X Church campus are well maintained and attractive. A bioretention garden was installed in 2016 to reduce stormwater drainage from the facility into the Baltimore County stormwater system. The rain garden consists of stone basin inlet channel which transfers stormwater from the parking lot to a drainage basin. The drainage basin contains native and non-native plants and has a sub-basin drainage structure to allow for stormwater infusion to the ground.



**Photo 3: Landscaping and Stormwater Management Facility/Rain Garden**

## **1.2 Operating Systems**

### **1. Heating and Cooling Central Plant System: Condition is Fair**

- The steam boilers, condensate pumping, and controls were replaced with the capital renovation program and are approximately 15 years old. Chemical feed for the steam system is currently in use by the maintenance staff.
- The chiller is a 120-ton air-cooled condensing unit and is approximately 25 years old. The unit exhibits signs of corrosion on the exterior cladding, but otherwise appears well maintained. Based upon the condition of the unit, it would be expected that the unit could serve the facility for another 10+ years with more frequent maintenance.
- The piping system serving the plant is original to the building constructed. With the chemical treatment system in place and being used, the piping system is in good condition for its age, however, items such as elbows and joints may need maintenance more frequently in the future.



**Photo 4a: Existing Steam Boiler System**



**Photo 4b: Existing Chilled Water System**

## **2. Air Handling Units: Condition is Fair to Poor**

- The two air handling units serving the parish hall, and the upper-level church are original to the building. The units are well maintained, but have reached the end of their intended life-cycle. The unit simplicity, which includes a fan with a belt drive sheave, a heating coil, and a cooling coil, has made repair relatively simple over the extended operation of the units.
- Outdoor air ventilation is not routed through the units, but rather induced into the spaces with operable windows, which is code compliant.

**3. Plumbing System and Bathrooms: Condition is Good to Fair**

- The restrooms within the building were upgraded during the capital renovation. The restroom systems adjacent to the sanctuary are clean and functional.
- ADA accessible toilet fixtures are available on the upper level and lower level. The lower level can be accessed with an elevator.



**Photo 5: Upper Unisex Bathroom**

**4. Electrical Power Distribution System: Condition is Good to Fair**

- The main incoming power distribution panel was replaced with the major capital renovation.
- The conductor and conduit serving equipment and devices throughout the facility is likely original to the existing building, except for new devices installed with the capital renovation.



**Photo 6: Existing Electrical System**

**5. Lighting System: Condition is Good**

- The majority of the lighting system was replaced during the major capital renovation.
  - Recessed downlights are LED.
  - Chandeliers are original to the building and luminaires have been converted to LED.
- A new lighting control system was installed with the capital renovation and is still in use.



**Photo 7: Interior Lighting Systems**

### 1.3 Building Envelop and Interior Finishes

#### 1. Roofing And Envelop Systems: Condition is Fair to Good

- The slate roofing system is original to the building. The roof is in good condition, primarily due to the slope of the roof allowing water and snow to quickly drain from the surface.
- The rain gutters and downspouts along the perimeter of the roof need repair or replacement. The gutters are in poor condition.
- The building envelope is a stone (appears to be natural stone) façade with mortar joints. The mortar jointing throughout the façade is in good to fair condition with little evidence of any required repointing. The stone coping on the chimney does require some repair.



**Photo 8: Roofing and Envelope System**

**2. Windows and Doors: Condition is Fair**

- The windows are original to the building. The frames of the windows have been maintained with new paint as needed. For their age, the windows are in fair condition, with the metal frame requiring recurring painting.
  - The upper windows are stained glass with an exterior protective single glazed clear glass system with metal framing.
  - The lower windows are single panes, colored glass with metal framing.
- The doors are primarily wood doors that have been painted and/or repaired as needed. The doors are in good to fair condition, with the doors requiring recurring painting.



**Photo 9: Exterior Windows and Doors**

**3. Interior Finishes and Accessories: Condition is Excellent to Good**

- The interior finishes of the church were mostly replaced or refinished during the capital renovation and are in very good condition.
- The flooring material within the main congregant seating area is a combination of wood, carpeting and stone/ceramic tiles and they are in good condition.
- The altar was replaced during the capital renovation and is a combination of stone tiles and wood flooring.
- The flooring within the chapel area is a combination of stone tiles and wood flooring.
- Wood paneling along the perimeter of the seating area is original to the building and well maintained.
- The altar area was replaced during the capital renovation program.
- The church was repainted during the capital renovation program.
- The public address (PA) and music system was replaced during the capital renovation program.



**Photo 10: Interior Finishes and Accessories**

# **EXHIBIT 6**

# ST. PIUS X PARISH FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## 1. Debts Parish Owes to Archdiocese of Baltimore

### School Debts

Unpaid Benefits     \$ 218,183.15     Teacher and school staff's unpaid benefits  
(2020-2021)

Parish Debts             \$ 336,242.25     This amount is for Parish cathedraticum, benefits  
and property insurance

**TOTAL:                     \$ 554,425.40**

**2. Deferred Payments.** The Archdiocese deferred Parish payment of benefits and property insurance for two years (FY2022- FY2023) pending the sale of the school. In September 2024, the Archdiocese began requiring the Parish to repay these debts at a rate of \$20,000 a month. This was the reason given to the Parish Leadership as to why the Parish would be unable to afford staff after September 30, 2024, and would be out of operating funds as of October 31, 2024 (see Decree of Canonical Parish Merger- St. Pius X Parish).

**3. Operating Deficit.** According to the "Seek the City - Parish Information Package" (p. 9), St. Pius X had a 5-Year average operating deficit of \$99,863 from 2017-2022. These deficits were primarily due to school building maintenance costs the Parish inherited before and after the school closed. <sup>1</sup>

FY 22: \$101,419.76

FY 23: \$99,167.23

These expenses were for utilities, maintenance, contracted facility services, phone (Verizon), property and casualty insurance, Wells Fargo (school copier), and technology expenses.

FY 24: \$46,018.20

The FY 24 school expenses are considerably less because the parish center moved back to the Rectory in the middle of 2023, therefore the school building's utilities were greatly reduced, and there was a large reduction in property & casualty insurance coverage and related premium, as well as the ending of various contractual obligations.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Pius X Church, Transaction Report, July 2021-June 2022, "School Building Expenses." St. Pius X Church, Transaction Report, July 2022 – June 2023, "School Building Expense Projection".

- 4. Parish Direct Financial Support of School.** In addition to the operating deficit noted above in 3, the Parish provided direct financial support for the school between FY 2017 and FY 2021 for urgent needs such as payroll, large, unexpected repairs, etc. The cumulative direct parish financial support of the school was \$222,266 when it closed in June 2021.

**Deferred Maintenance.** “Seek the City - Parish Information Package - “St. Pius X” p. 6, states that St. Pius X has a deferred maintenance cost of \$839,290 as of 2022. We do not know on what the Archdiocese based this figure, unless it is also related to the school building. According to a professional engineer’s assessment of St. Pius X Church building, it is generally in “fair” to “excellent” condition, with only the air handling units being rated “fair to poor.”

- 5. Church Repairs:** Between 2008 and 2009, St. Pius X parishioners raised and spent \$2.3 million to extensively renovate the church, including rebuilding the altar and moving it closer to the parishioners, new electric and lighting enhancements, improved sound system, adding an elevator for full access, adding a handicapped accessible bathroom, improved meeting space, painting, and pew refinishing, among other upgrades.

- 6. School Sale:** The Archdiocese listed the school for sale at \$5.3 million. It had received at least two "letters of intent" for \$6.0M and \$5.3M for +/- 5.5 acres and 5.3 acres, respectively, that are known of, but parishioners have not been given direct information on the possible real estate transactions.

**In Conclusion:** If the school building were to be sold, all debt and payables would be paid off and a material surplus would remain for the Parish to use rebuild the parishioner base, become self-sustaining, and evangelize and minister to the surrounding community.

# **EXHIBIT 7**

# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

## FOR SALE/LEASE

### PROPERTY HIGHLIGHTS:

**SALE PRICE: \$5,300,000**  
**LEASE RATE: \$13.75/SF/NNN**

**Year-Built:** 1962 & 1968

- **Building Size:** ±53,712 SF
- **Type:** School, gym and former convent
- **School:** 2-story, ±27,640 SF
- **Gym/School Addition:** ±14,570 SF
- **Former Convent:** 2-story, ±9,048
- **Basement:** ±2,466 SF

- **Construction:** Masonry
- **Roof:** TPO (2019), flat built up over gym
- **Zoning:** DR 5.5
- **Parking:** Approximately 155 spaces (field verification required). Shared parking with adjacent church.
- **R.E. Taxes:** Tax Exempt
- **Parcel Size:** ±5.5 acres
- **Heating/HVAC:** Heating - central system with boilers and convective radiators / Cooling (in limited offices) - mini-split units

- **Uses:** Redevelopment for assisted living or townhome development
- **Electrical/Power:** The main electrical service size is 600 amps, 120/208 volt three-phase four-wire alternating current (AC). The electrical wiring is reported to be copper, installed in metallic conduit, flexible metal conduit or non-metallic sheathed cable. Circuit breaker panels are located throughout the building.
- **Fire & Life/Safety:** Hydrants, smoke detectors, alarms and extinguishers. Single fire sprinkler zone in former Incinerator Room

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR

dfritz@klnb.com

410.574.1410

Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR

jnolan@klnb.com

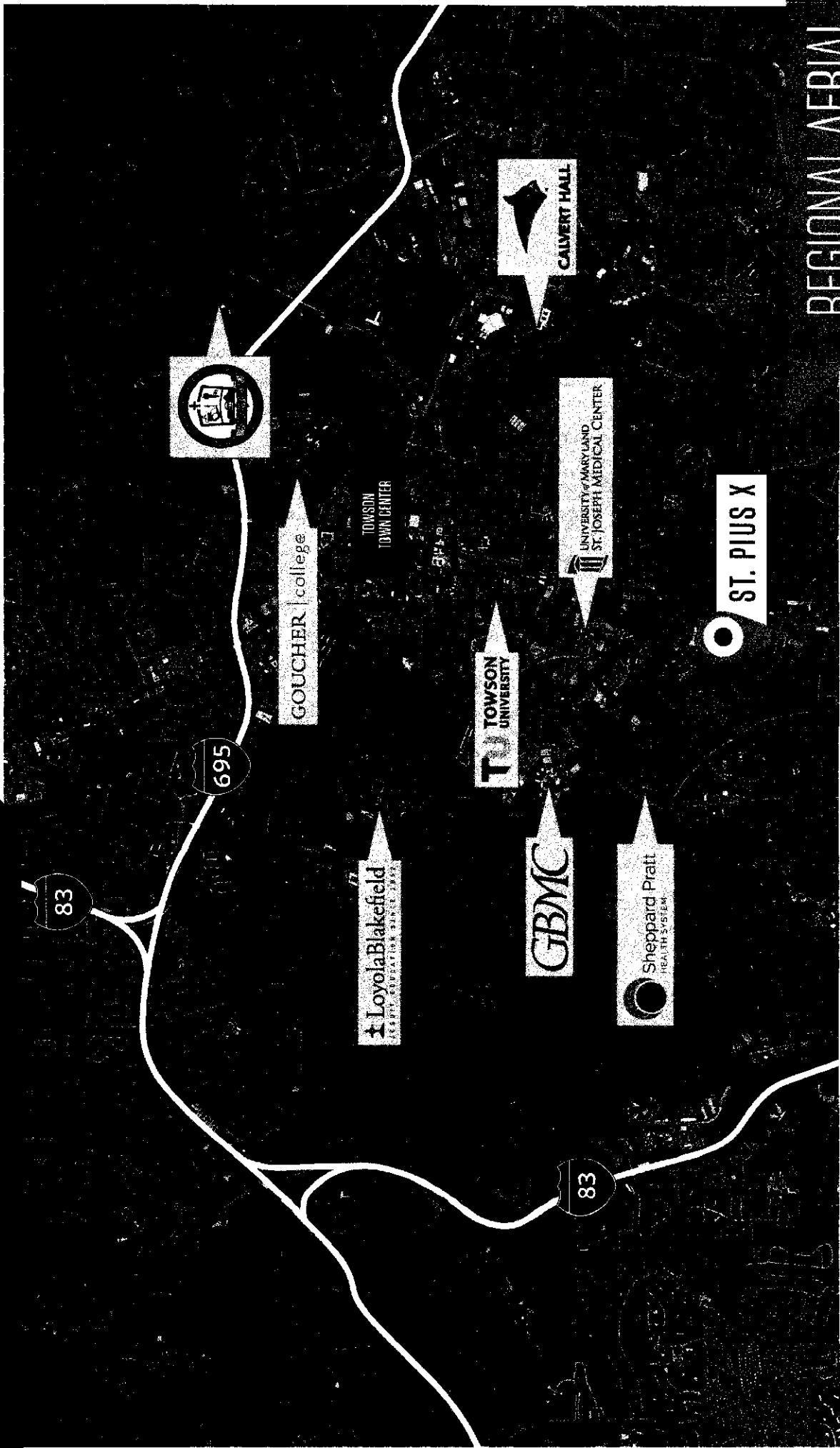
410.722.2000

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204

**N | K | N | B**

# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



REGIONAL AERIAL

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@kinb.com  
410 574 1410

Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@kinb.com  
410 574 1410

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204  
410 574 1410

kinb

# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



±5.5 ACRES

AERIAL

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR

dfritz@klinb.com  
410.574.1450

Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR

jnolan@klinb.com  
410.574.1450

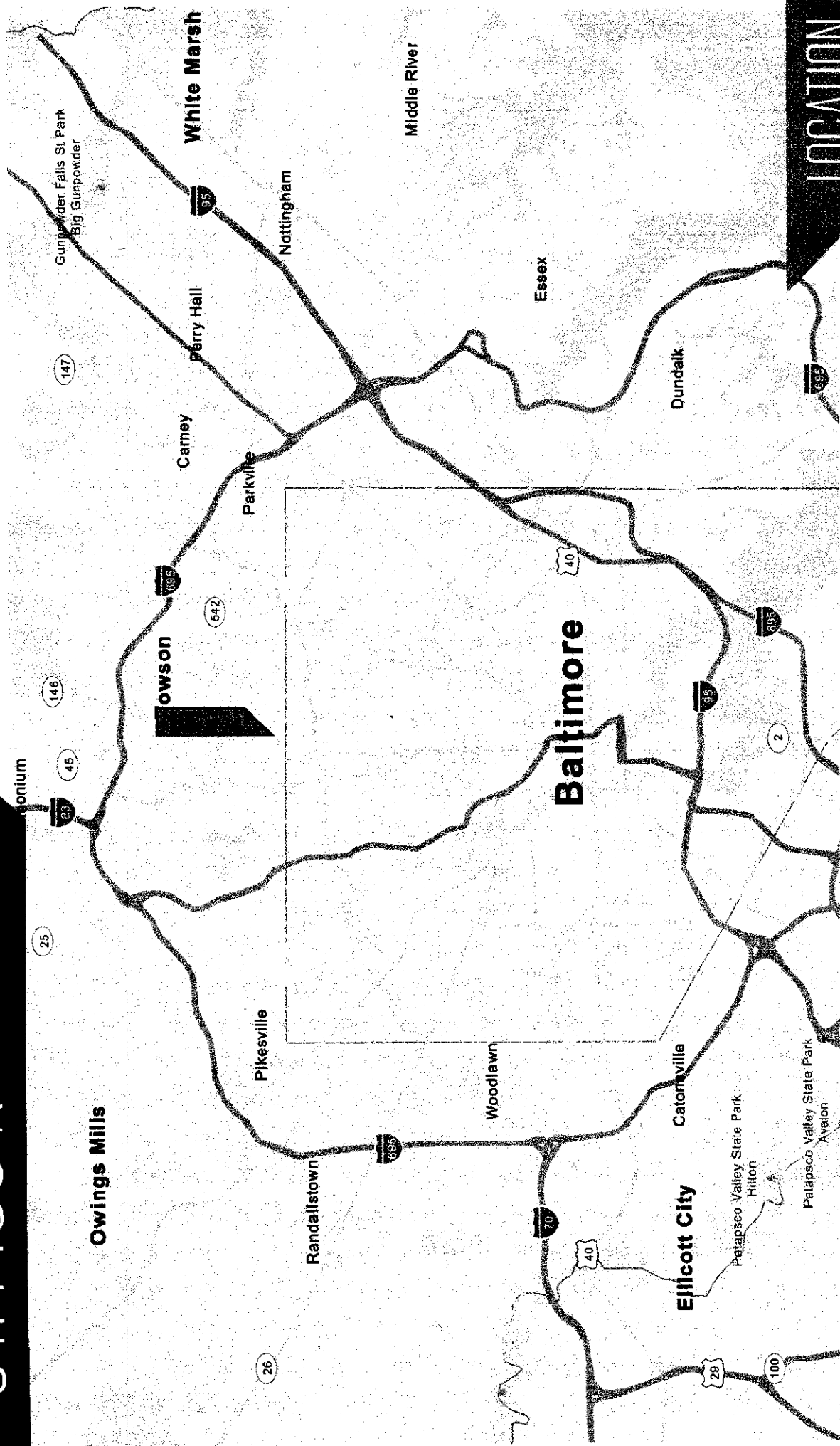
100 West Road, Suite 505

Towson, MD 21204

N | K | I | N | B

# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



## LOCATION

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@klnb.com

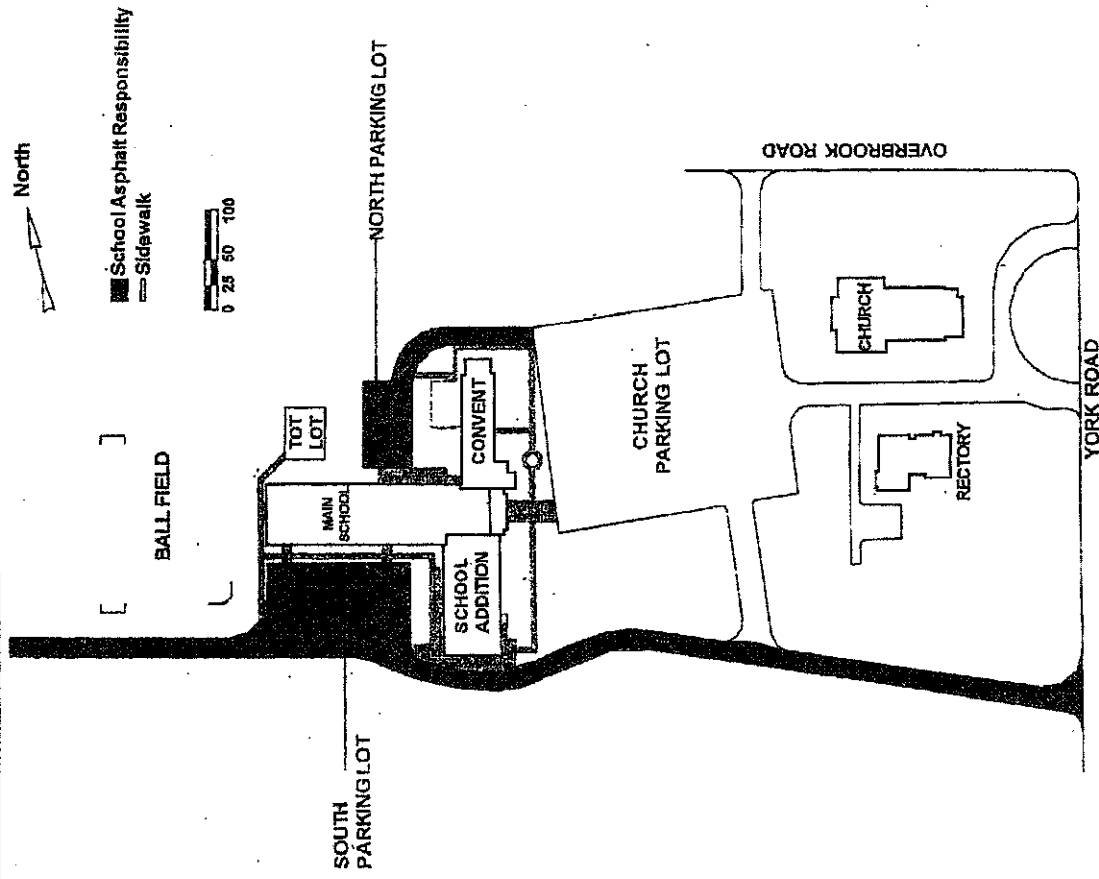
Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@klnb.com

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204



# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



## SITE PLAN

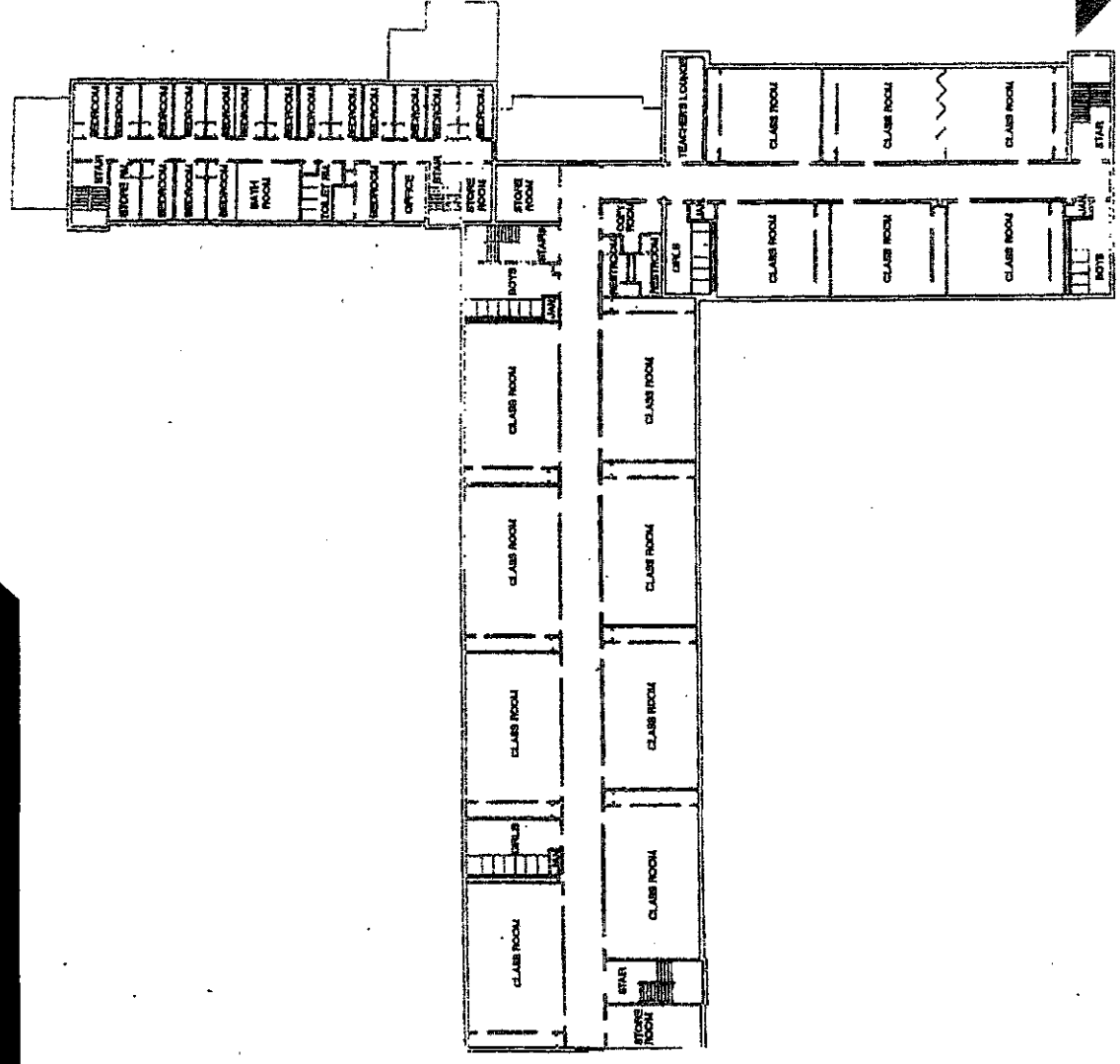
David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@klnb.com  
410.774.1450

Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@klnb.com  
410.622.3000

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204  
klnb.com

# klnb





## 2ND FLOOR PLAN

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@klnb.com  
443-574-1410

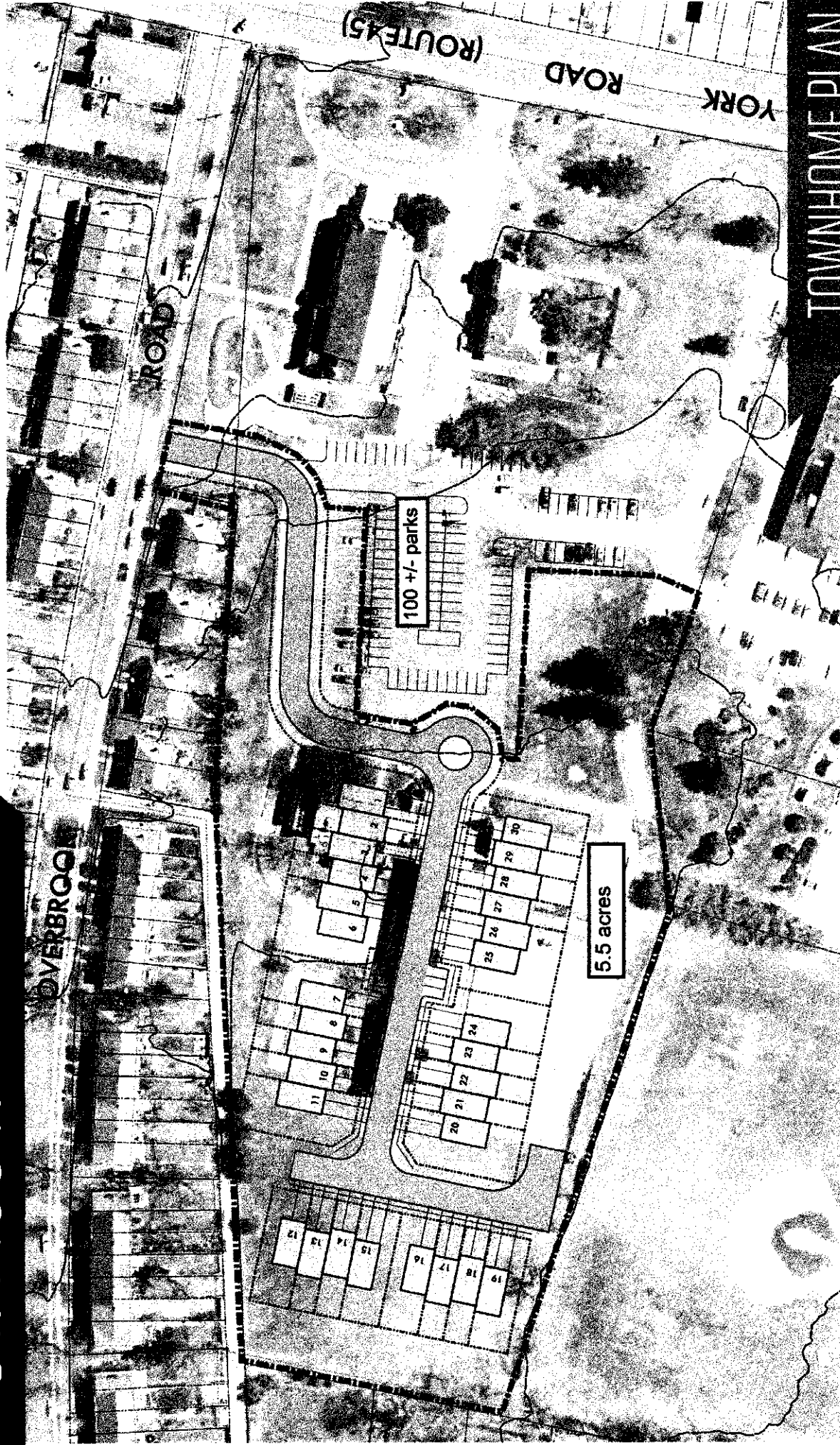
Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@klnb.com  
443-632-2065

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204  
klnb.com



# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



## TOWNHOME PLAN

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@klnb.com  
443-574-1410

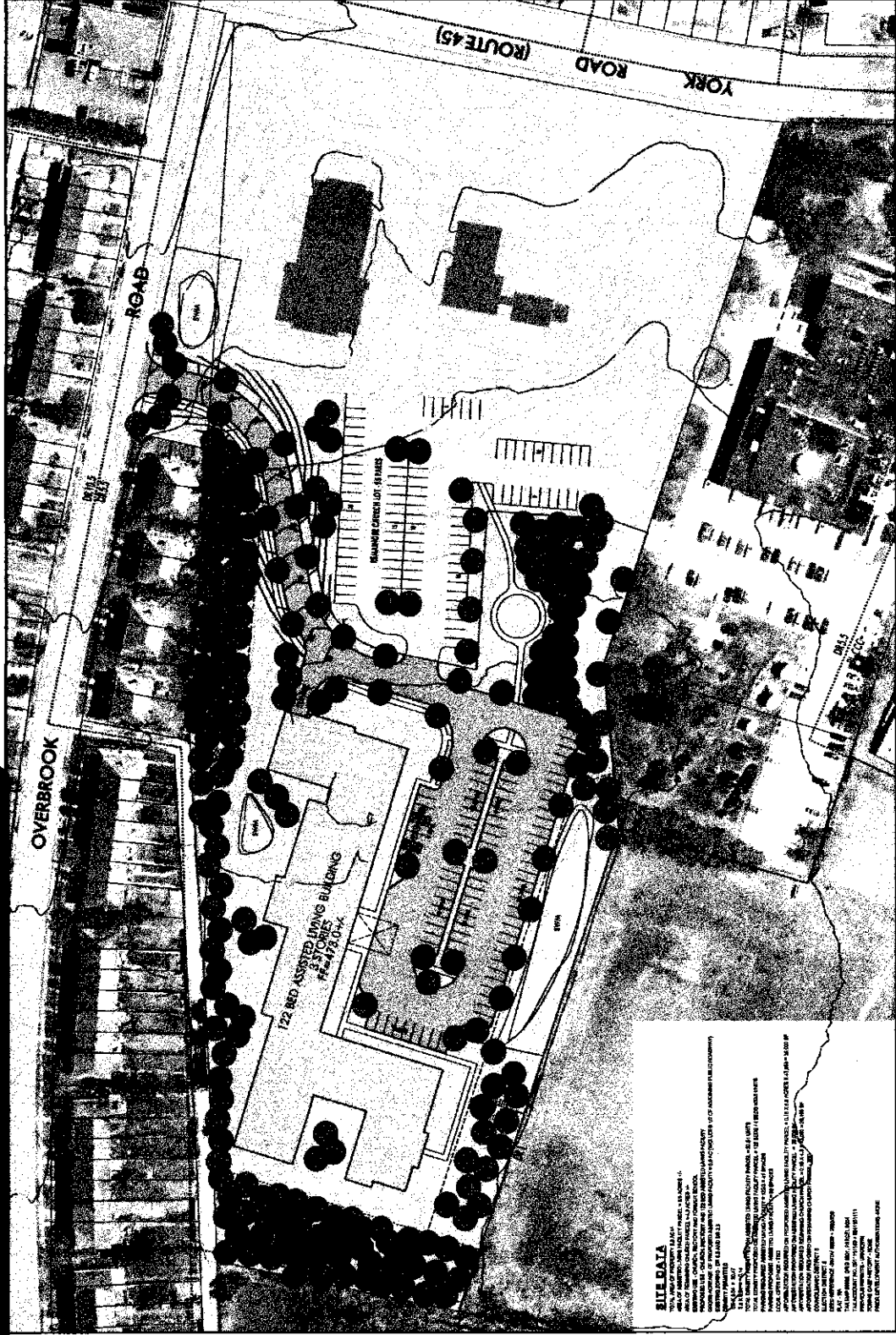
Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@klnb.com  
443-632-2065

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204  
klnb.com

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# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



**MATISWARFIELD**  
 6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
 Tel: 410-528-1111  
 Fax: 410-528-1111  
 www.matiswarfield.com

## ASSISTED LIVING PLAN

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@klnb.com  
443-574-1410

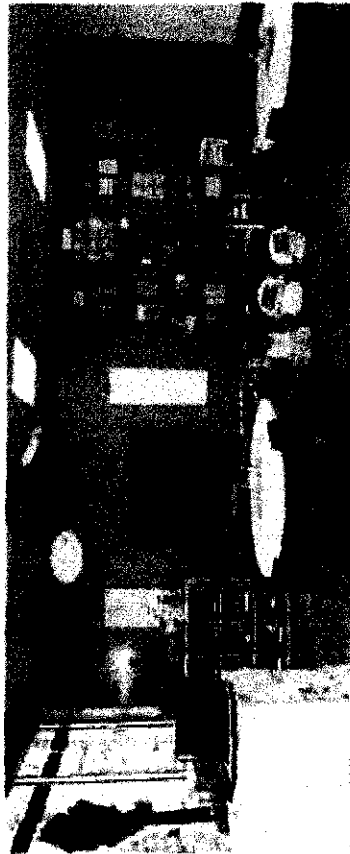
Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@klnb.com  
443-632-2065

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204  
klnb.com



# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County



PHOTOS

David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR  
dfritz@klnb.com  
443-574-1410

Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR  
jnolan@klnb.com  
443-632-2065

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Towson, MD 21204  
klnb.com

# N I K I n b

# ST. PIUS X

6432 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212  
Baltimore County

CLICK TO VIEW PROPERTY WEBSITE

For More Information, Please Contact:

**David J. Fritz, CCIM, SIOR**   **Joseph P. Nolan, SIOR**

[djfriz@klnb.com](mailto:djfriz@klnb.com)

443-574-1410

[jnolan@klnb.com](mailto:jnolan@klnb.com)

443-632-2065

100 West Road, Suite 505  
Baltimore, MD 21204

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