

56 Wilbur Ln
Adams, MA 01220
December 14, 2008

Bishop Timothy McDonnell
Diocese of Springfield
65 Elliot St.
Springfield, MA 01105

Dear Excellency:

All of my correspondences with you to date have been prudent and logical in content, supported with statistical data, requesting your reconsideration for the parish consolidation in Adams. With the scheduled closing of St. Stanislaus Kostka on Dec 28th, in this eleventh hour, I would like to take this opportunity to submit to you one last spectrum to consider, which is the human emotional and spiritual impact resulting from this reconfiguration.

I'm sure as a young man, when you felt the call of God on your life, you wished to serve Him in the most honorable vocation of the priesthood. Your intention as a shepherd was never to harm people, but instead to provide them with love, care, concern and benevolence. I'm asking you now on behalf of the 756 parishioners of St. Stanislaus Kostka, to view them as precious souls, and recognize their significance as devout and faithful children of Almighty God. I know that you have not had the privilege to know them as intimately as I have. Please allow me to tell you that this parish contains some of the world's most outstanding members of our society.

I've interviewed several of whom I speak, inquiring about their fond memories. They exposed to me the window of their soul, and I thought it best to share what was revealed to you, their Reverend Bishop.

Respectfully Submitted in Christ's Name,

Mrs. Laurie Haas

Enclosures (7)

I am 90 years old and have been a member of St. Stan's church my whole life; and I went to St. Stan's school too. All I can remember since I was a little boy was my mother and father taking me to church—ALL the time. And still to this day I'm a daily communicant. My parents were devoted members of St. Stan's and they were founding sponsors of the church—you couldn't ask for better people. They raised us to think and do good & right things. I also appreciate the school and what I was taught by the nuns. The older I got, the more I appreciated all that they did for me.

My entire life, I have always did whatever it was, I could do to help my church. I would shovel snow, rake leaves, repairs boilers. I was happy to do anything. I'm still an usher and I've been an usher longer than I can remember. I'll be retired from ushering at the end of this year, when the church is closed. I never thought this could ever happen, and it just seems so wrong to me. It is so very sad for everyone, it seems like everything in this world is turning upside down. I will miss my church SO much.

Henry Armata
2 Clifford Ln
Adams, MA

I was baptized at St Stanislaus Kostka and I am almost 92 years old. There are absolutely no words to explain how much I love my Lord and how much I love my church. I live close by and walk to church everyday to pray. I feel as if St. Stan's church is His home and it is my home too. It is there, when I'm praying that I really feel the Lord's presence, that He listens to me and hears all of my prayers. Right now I'm praying with all my heart to save our beautiful church. I'm hoping that this is not against God's Holy will, because I need my church. If it is closed, I will be completely homebound and unable to attend Mass anymore, because it's too far for me. There are a lot of people like myself, who live nearby and walk to church. We will no longer be able to make it to Mass, and this is going to be just heartbreaking for us. It will also be devastating to pass by and see my church empty and all boarded up. It will be a shame to see the school children have to pass by an empty church and walk across town to another church. A school and a church belong together. I imagine it probably won't be long before the school will be closed too. This is a very sad day for the Catholic Church. I was brought up to believe and to love God, to be very devoted to our Lord and to love His Church. That is why St Stanislaus Kostka Church is my entire life and means EVERYTHING to me. That is why I love it so dearly. My heart and my soul have been completely shattered and I'm just devastated.

Sophie Armata
97 Summer St
Adams, MA

I've been a member of St. Stanislaus Kostka church my entire life. I'm 88 yrs old and for the past 20 years my job in housekeeping has been to clean my beloved St Stan's. I began this work with my late husband and now continue it with the help of my daughter. I love the Lord with all my heart and soul, and it's been an absolute privilege to serve Him in this church. I love everything about St. Stanislaus Kostka. When I walk through our sanctuary, I literally sense the Holy presence of God and His love toward us. No other place on earth has ever inspired me in this way; there is something wonderful and special about St. Stan's.

Words can't describe how absolutely devastated I am about the closing. I haven't stopped crying since it was announced in August. I'm literally sick and can't sleep. Most of the people here, my dear, beautiful friends—EVERYONE, is experiencing the exact same thing. This feels like the death of a precious family member. We can't comprehend how this can actually be happening to us. Everyone is praying, actually begging God, to not let this terrible fate unfold. We know that He loves us dearly and we know that He hears all of our fervent prayers and petitions.

Helen Kurpaska
Adams, MA

I'm 96 years old and I've been a member of St. Stanislaus Kostka all of my life. I made every one of my sacraments there and I'm a graduate of St. Stan's school. My life has been so very blest by the Lord—beyond anything I could have ever asked or imagined. I thank Him everyday for giving me a keen mind and good health, in fact I was very active right up until an accident just last year. I have so many wonderful memories of St. Stan's. I can remember, in fact, just like it was yesterday, being part of the procession on Jan 22, 1926 welcoming Archbishop Jan Cieplak from Poland; that wonderful man who worked so courageously for the Catholic Church, fighting against the communist regime. I'm delighted to read in the local newspapers that Adams still has courageous fighters. God has always been the center of my entire life, so in turn, I was always active in church: I was a lector, I belonged to the Children of Mary and The Rosary Sodality. In fact, I helped with the annual bazaar, pinching perogies right up until just last year. The Lord has been so good to me and I love Him so much. I feel so very sad about the closing of St. Stanislaus Church. I pray all day long, always remembering to open each and every prayer with a special intention to save the church. I love St. Stanislaus Kostka church, as if it were my own family.

Veronica Sobon
29 N. Summer St.
Adams, MA

I am a devoted Catholic who became a new member of St. Stanislaus Kostka one year ago when I moved to Adams. The first thing that attracted me to St. Stan's was the breathtaking beauty of its sanctuary. I am now in my 80's, but when I was working, my profession required that I travel all over the United States and abroad. I have attended Mass in countless churches all over the world. St. Stanislaus Kostka's European style art and ornamentation is a treasure, which should be protected and preserved as a tribute to the Roman Catholic Church. I can't help but be inspired to contemplate the beauty & holiness of God every time I enter that magnificent church.

What attracted me even further however, was the beauty and warmth I found among its parishioners. They extended genuine Christian charity to me, for, "I was a stranger, and you invited me in". The kindness, friendship, and acceptance I received at St. Stan's was beyond anything I have experienced anyplace else. This genuinely devout, faith-filled parish truly LIVES its Christian beliefs. With all the ugliness in the world today, to discard this magnificent spiritual oasis, and treat it as something insignificant, is an absolute travesty. I feel as if I have just found the most wonderful church home of my entire life, and the winds of change have just come and blown it all away. I know I can't possibly be as devastated, as the parishioners of Polish descent whose ancestors built the church. But trust me, this 100% Irish lady is brokenhearted and sheds her share of tears over the tremendous loss of something so special and beautiful in our lives.

Mrs. Marjorie A. Wasilenko
17 Pleasant St
Adams, MA

My whole life has revolved around the Church, and I'm 103 years old. I've always been a member of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish and I was a charter member of St. Stanislaus School. My parents enrolled me the very first year that it was open. When I was a child, the entire school would attend Holy Mass EVERY morning, and we had Catechism class everyday. We were expected to memorize and learn all the precepts of our Catholic faith. Things were much stricter in those days. For example, I remember actually confessing to the "sin" of seeing a Charlie Chaplin movie. It may have been strict, but we were brought up to LOVE the Lord and I DO. Like myself, all of the people from St. Stan's are REAL Christians, who love the Lord with ALL their heart. This is why we love St. Stanislaus church so much. That is why I feel so awful about it closing. In fact, it bothers me so much I can't sleep. I'm one of the oldest parishioners and I don't think there is anyone praying harder than I am to save St. Stan's.

Mrs. Jessie Wojtaszek
71 Summer St.
Adams, MA

God made a beautiful world, and throughout my life I have traveled extensively. Where ever I would go, one of my first stops was always to each areas' Catholic Churches. So throughout my lifetime I have seen scores of churches. None of them however could surpass my beloved church back home in Adams—St. Stanislaus Kostka.

From my baptism to the present (and I am now 86 years old), I have been overwhelmingly BLESSED to be a parishioner in that magnificent edifice, which exudes the glory & very presence of Almighty God—which was built by the sacrifices of our Polish people, and stands as their legacy.

I am now so very heartbroken, as is our entire parish community. It is devastating to think we will no longer be able to attend Mass in the cherished church where we have worshiped our entire life and have kept our traditions. This privilege and blessing will now be taken away from us forever. The tremendous sadness we feel, with this great loss is unbearable.

Veronica M. Ziembra
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