

August 15, 2008

The Most Reverend Timothy McDonnell  
Bishop of Springfield  
The Diocese of Springfield  
65 Elliott Street  
Springfield, MA 01105

Dear Bishop McDonnell:

We write as baptized lay members of Christ's faithful and as parishioners in good standing of the parish of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish in the Town of Adams, in the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Last Saturday and Sunday, August 9 and 10, we received verbal notice from remarks from the pulpit made on those two days in the course of the weekend Masses that it is your intention to close our parish and merge our faith community with the Parish of Notre Dame des Sept Douleurs and St. Thomas Aquinas.

If those verbal announcements of August 9 and 10 constitute formal notification of a decree of suppression or a decree of merger, then we request a written copy of any such decree at your earliest convenience, so that we can exercise our rights of appeal under canon law.

If you have in fact signed a decree regarding St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, then this letter is our formal appeal, or *remonstratio*, against any such decree, and in accordance with the provisions of canons 1734 we respectfully urge you to suspend the execution of any such decrees, and to revoke or amend any decrees that would alter the existing canonical status of our parish. We are submitting this appeal to you within the peremptory time-limit of ten canonical days from the time we were lawfully notified of this action.

Conversely, if those verbal announcements of August 9 and 10 are merely a statement of intention about decrees to be forthcoming in the future, then we request that you give us a written copy on any such decree, promptly and in a timely fashion so that we may exercise our right of appeal as parishioners in good standing.

Please be assured that our parish meets all of the criteria for spiritual and financial vibrancy. Not only is St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish the only one in northern Berkshire County which still supports a convent and parochial school, as well as a cemetery, our parish is also one of only two in the area to have an adoration chapel. In addition, a panopoly of social organizations (e.g., Rosary Sodality, St. Michael's Society) are intimately connected to our parish. Furthermore, we have been fiscally responsible. Unlike a number of other parishes, St. Stanislaus has consistently been "in the black," and we have recently held successful fundraising drives for the maintenance and repair of both our church and rectory buildings.

With regard to the shortage of clergy, we have looked carefully at this and have several ideas that are worthy of your consideration, all fully in accord with Catholic doctrine:

- 1 St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish is already “twinned” with the Parish of Notre Dame de Sept Douleurs and Thomas Aquinas, and that arrangement has been quite successful. Unlike some other “yoked” parishes served by a single priest, our parish is within easy walking distance (just one-third of a mile) from its counterpart just down the street.
- 2 We are willing to reach out and seek other qualified Catholic clergy, from religious orders and from overseas countries which are now a major source of seminarians and clerics across Catholic America. As an aside, it is worth noting in this regard that St. Stanislaus Kostka parishioners have made disproportionate contributions to the priesthood in the Diocese of Springfield, including the current Diocesan Director of Vocations, Fr. Gary Dailey.
- 3 The laity of our parish already plays an active role in its day-to-day affairs, in positions ranging from Eucharistic ministers, to lectors, to choir members, to physical plant custodians. If given the opportunity to do so, we are more than willing to play an increased role in that regard.

In brief, Your Excellency, we are looking for solutions to preserve St. Stanislaus Kostka as a fully-functioning parish. Among the possible alternatives are:

- (1) Maintaining the current “yoking” arrangement between the two existing parishes in Adams while keeping all three of the existing church buildings (i.e., St. Stanislaus Kostka, Notre Dame and St. Thomas Aquinas) open. Indeed, we understand that this is what the Mullen Commission Report proposed.
- (2) Maintaining the current “yoking” arrangement between the two existing parishes in Adams while keeping two of the three existing church buildings (i.e., St. Stanislaus Kostka and Notre Dame) open while closing the third (i.e., St. Thomas Aquinas). In fact, that was precisely the recommendation of the Adams delegation to the Pastoral Planning Committee meeting that was held in Pittsfield this past February.
- (3) Merging the two existing parishes and closing two of the three existing church buildings in Adams (i.e., St. Thomas Aquinas and Notre Dame) while keeping St. Stanislaus Kostka’s open (albeit under a new name).

We recognize that, during these hard times, difficult choices must be made. However, if it becomes necessary to close two of the three church buildings in Adams, we respectfully suggest Notre Dame should be closed before St. Stanislaus for the following reasons:

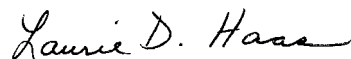
- (1) While the size, state of maintenance and availability of parking for both Notre Dame and St. Stanislaus churches are roughly comparable, it is patently obvious to any impartial observer that St. Stanislaus’ is both architecturally and artistically superior, and as such better expresses the glory of God and

hence affords a more appropriate atmosphere for a house of worship.

- (2) Since Notre Dame and St. Thomas Aquinas and their various support buildings (i.e., two rectories, and the defunct Notre Dame school) form a single consolidated compound on the main thoroughfare in Town, they are likely to be more attractive to potential buyers, and thus their sale will raise more money for the sole remaining parish. Furthermore, because they are likely to sell relatively quickly, they will be subject to local property taxes for a much shorter period of time.
- (3) By contrast, St. Stanislaus is in a less commercially attractive area, and thus it is less likely to be sold as quickly as Notre Dame and St. Thomas Aquinas (and hence will be subject to local property taxes for a longer period of time), nor is its sale likely to raise as much money when it finally does sell.
- (4) Assuming one may accept at face value the reassurances that we have received that St. Stanislaus School will be kept open, then the St. Stanislaus church building is even less likely to sell quickly or for an attractive price because the proximity of the school would severely restrict any use that a developer might make of the church property.
- (5) St. Stanislaus School relies heavily on Kolbe Hall, which forms the basement of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Church building. Kolbe Hall, in turn, is used for a variety of school functions, including as a gymnasium and an auditorium. School dances, graduation, dinners, and the annual Bazaar fundraiser are all held there. Moreover, the school needs the church proper for weekday Masses and other religious gatherings. Closing the church building would seriously jeopardize the continued viability of the school.
- (6) While it is true that both Notre Dame/St. Thomas and St. Stanislaus have rectories, only St. Stanislaus has a convent. This is critical because the two Felician sisters at St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish play a vital role in the administration of St. Stanislaus School. Our communities sole Eucharistic Adoration Chapel is located in this convent.

We sincerely thank you for your time and attention to these matters.

Respectfully Submitted in Christ,



Laurie D. Haas  
56 Wilbur Ln  
Adams, MA 01220

Continued:

*Dola A. Lipinski* *Robin J. Loughman*

Dola A. Lipinski  
27 Victory Street  
Adams, MA 01220

Robin J. Loughman  
3 John Street  
Adams, MA 01220

*Wesley P. Scalise*

Wesley P. Scalise  
6 Bob's Hill  
Adams, MA 01220

*Joseph J. Lipinski*

Joseph J. Lipinski  
27 Victory Street  
Adams, MA 01220

*Michael E. Parada*

Michael E. Parada  
70 North Summer Street  
Adams, MA 01220

*Thomas M. Zepka*

Thomas M. Zepka  
695 Savoy Road  
Cheshire, MA 01225