



ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE
2121 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135-3193

September 17, 2004

Saint Anselm
Parish Pastoral Council
c/o Mr. John J. Ryan, Jr.
155 Ford Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

Dear Mr. Ryan and members of the Parish Pastoral Council,

I have now had the chance to fully review your letter requesting that I revoke the decree suppressing Saint Anselm Parish in Sudbury. You have chosen to make this recourse stating that the Archdiocese improperly applied the reconfiguration process in Sudbury, that the Presbyteral Council did not have a meaningful consultation concerning your parish, and that my decision did not fully take into consideration the impact on the deaf community.

As Archbishop, I made an important decision that the entire Archdiocese of Boston could not continue and be fully spiritually and financially viable, as it is currently constituted. A system was needed to identify where in the Archdiocese we could continue a proper level of pastoral service with fewer Churches. To the best of my ability I created a system using the existent clusters to identify these areas by seeking the advice of as many people as possible from as many different perspectives as possible. In the end, I am confident that with the totality of advice I had enough information to make proper decisions.

Concerning Sudbury, Saint Anselm Parish has been discussed as a parish that may close for twenty years. Most especially a possible merger was discussed in the late 1990's; in the end the people were able to prevail upon Cardinal Law to keep the Parish open in hope of becoming a more vibrant parish. At this time, faced with the true need to close parishes for the overall viability of the Archdiocese, Saint Anselm Parish was identified as a parish to close because Our Lady of Fatima Parish and the other parishes in the area could meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of the People of Saint Anselm Parish.

Concerning my consultation with the Presbyteral Council, I need to inform you that the Presbyteral Council had a profound effect on my ultimate decisions. The Presbyteral Council met over three days, and discussed many more parishes than were ultimately selected. Each parish discussion was given as much time as was needed and after it was over I reflected carefully on what was discussed and in many instances changed my

original thinking based upon their comments. Concerning your parish, not one member of the Presbyteral Council expressed disagreement with my recommendation.

Finally, concerning the deaf community. As you may know, as part of the reconfiguration process many apostolates were relocated including the deaf community. Recently, the deaf community has been warmly accepted as members of Sacred Heart Parish in Newton. I am confident those parishioners who are deaf from Saint Anselm Parish and the surrounding area will find a warm welcome there as well.

After reviewing your request and after consultation with my advisors I must inform you that the information you provided does not rise to the level that would have me change my mind, nor does it present information that would compel me to alter or revoke the decree. Moreover, it is my firm belief that I have met all the standards in Canon Law necessary to uphold the action of this decree. For these reasons I am not going to revoke the decree as you requested.

In accord with Canon Law (Canon 1737) you now have the opportunity to have recourse to my hierarchical superior in Rome. If you so choose to do so, please know that this must arrive within fifteen days. The most efficient way to bring this about is for you to deliver recourse to me at the above address and have me pass it on to the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome. However, you may send the recourse directly to the Vatican yourself if you so choose, but it must arrive within fifteen days from when you receive this letter.

I want to assure you that I did take your request seriously, but I am confident despite the fact I have asked you to sacrifice something you love deeply that I have made the right decision for the good of the Church in Sudbury and for the good of the entire Archdiocese of Boston.

With all good wishes and assurance of a remembrance in my prayers, I am

Devotedly yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean O'Meara". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Archbishop of Boston