



October 16, 2004 - Archdiocese of Boston Announces Postponement of Two Parish Closings

(Boston, Massachusetts) October 16, 2004 - The Archdiocese of Boston today announced it will delay the closing of two parishes previously slated to close this month, St. Bernard in West Newton and St. Mary of the Angels in Roxbury. The decision to delay these closings was made by Archbishop Sean O'Malley with consultation from a number of parties including the reconfiguration review committee formed by the Archbishop last week.

St. Bernard on Washington Street in West Newton was previously scheduled to close on Monday, October 25, however, the parish will remain open for worship on Sundays until further notice. The decision to establish a later closing date for St. Bernard's was made to provide more time for the Archdiocese to work with parishioners there. A new closing date has not yet been determined. A special liturgy planned to acknowledge 130 years of service to the West Newton community will be celebrated at St. Bernard's at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday the 24th of October.

St. Mary of the Angels on Columbus Avenue in Roxbury will remain open for two more years in order to provide the community continued assistance in reducing neighborhood violence. The Jesuits also have agreed to continue to staff St. Mary's for the next two years.

"I am mindful of the sadness many parishioners have experienced as a result of parish closures," stated Archbishop Sean O'Malley. "While the reconfiguration process must continue, I recognize the need to communicate more fully our vision and plans to the parishioners impacted. My hope is that by delaying the closing of St. Bernard's we will be able to provide additional assistance to the parishioners who are finding this process particularly difficult. At St. Mary of the Angels, the Archdiocese desires to provide a pastoral presence to the surrounding neighborhood in light of a recent increase in crime and a concern for the well being of local residents."

The pastors of both parishes acknowledged the challenges involved in arriving at these decisions. "I appreciate the acknowledgement of the difficulties that many of my parishioners are experiencing in closing this parish. It is my hope that we are able to use this time to continue the process with constructive conversation," said Father Paul Kilroy, who has served of pastor at St. Bernard's for 3 years.

Father David Gill, SJ, pastor of St. Mary's commented, "We are pleased to have the opportunity to serve our church community and the larger neighborhood in whatever ways will be most helpful."

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