



November 7, 2004 - Statement of The Archdiocese of Boston regarding the Closing of the Immaculate Conception Church in Winchester

(Brighton, MA) November 7, 2004...At the conclusion of the closing liturgy last night at the Immaculate Conception Church, most parishioners left the church to go to the parish reception. A number of parishioners learned that one elderly parishioner would not leave the church and they urged him to join them and leave. Despite their urging, he would not leave. When the parishioners left, the only people left in the church were the parishioner, the pastor and two off-duty policemen who had attended the mass. They all continued to urge the man to leave. When he would not, the pastor, Fr. Thomas Foley, asked the officer to remove the man. Fr. Foley took this action because he had concerns for this individual's safety, since it appeared he would be staying in the church alone and because of his concern for the rest of the parishioners who had seen this parish closing through to conclusion, including the prayerful final liturgy. In his heart, Fr. Foley felt he could not allow this one parishioner to upset the other parishioners. Fr. Foley's actions do not represent a change in the policies of the Archdiocese, but rather his own judgment about what this particular situation warranted. He acted out of concern for the safety of this individual, elderly parishioner and the rest of his parishioners who had sadly but steadily seen this closing process through to the prayerful, final liturgy. In his heart, he felt he could not let this one parishioner disturb the closing event.

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