



December 14, 2004 - Archdiocese of Boston Announces Changes to Reconfiguration Plans in Plymouth and Newton

(Boston, Massachusetts) - December 14, 2004...The Archdiocese of Boston today announced changes to the plan for reconfiguration in the Town of Plymouth and the City of Newton. The Archbishop has reversed his decision to close Blessed Kateri Tekawitha Parish in Plymouth and has asked four parishes in Newton, St. Bernard, Corpus Christi, Mary Immaculate of Lourdes and St. Philip Neri, to enter into a period of re-evaluation and to provide recommendations within the next year. Archbishop O'Malley made these decisions in consultation with the Meade/Eisner Reconfiguration Review Committee, an external committee formed by the Archbishop to identify ways to improve completion of the reconfiguration process.

Archbishop O'Malley said, "In keeping with my commitment to study the impact of new information on previously announced parish closing decisions I have modified the reconfiguration plans for Newton and Plymouth. I am very grateful to members of the Reconfiguration Review Committee and those with whom they have worked so diligently to assist me with these difficult and important decisions."

The decision to keep Blessed Kateri Tekawitha Parish open follows from a better understanding of the dramatic residential development and corresponding population growth in Plymouth, geographically the largest town in Massachusetts and one of the fastest growing. West Plymouth, where the parish is located, is an area that comprises 17 square miles and is by itself larger than several surrounding towns. There has been much residential construction there in recent years and there are 915 acres still available for future development. The facilities at Blessed Kateri Tekawitha Parish have the capacity to grow to provide for the needs of the Catholics of West Plymouth in the years ahead.

Archbishop O'Malley has decided that determination of the best way to meet the needs of the Catholic community in Newton requires more time in light of new information that has been learned since reconfiguration decisions were announced in May. In particular, it was originally thought that the Catholic Deaf Community would move to Corpus Christi Parish, however, the Catholic Deaf Community is now well established at Sacred Heart Parish, Newton; the Newton Catholic population at St. Bernard and Corpus Christi parishes invites further analysis and evaluation; the issue of available and adequate facilities for religious education and parish meetings needs to be looked at more closely at St. Philip Neri and Mary Immaculate of Lourdes parishes; the sizeable number of people who are currently parishioners of Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Parish who reside in Needham. These factors all prompted the Archbishop's desire to have a new look at these particular parishes.

Having personally spoken with the pastors of the four parishes in Newton explaining to them his desire for a re-evaluation of the plan for reconfiguration, the Archbishop will soon appoint two priests to be administrators for these parishes. One priest will be administrator for both Saint Bernard Parish and Corpus Christi Parish and will work with both parishes during the course of the coming year in order to make a recommendation for providing pastoral care in an ongoing and stable manner for these two communities. The other priest will be the administrator for both Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Parish and Saint Philip Neri Parish and will work with these two parishes as well as the Korean Catholic Community during the course of the coming year in order to make a recommendation for providing pastoral care in an ongoing and stable manner for those communities.

It is the Archbishop's belief that the mission of renewing and revitalizing the Archdiocese of Boston is best served by careful attention to the decisions concerning reconfiguration, including reconsideration of decisions in light of new information. It is his hope that the people of the Archdiocese, as a family of faith, will go forward to build up the Church.

As new information has come to light, Archbishop O'Malley has worked with the Reconfiguration Review Committee and has reconsidered a number of reconfiguration decisions. In October, the Archbishop decided to delay the closing of St. Mary of the Angels in Roxbury. 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. Later that month, the Archbishop reconsidered his decision to close St. Catherine's of Sienna in Charlestown and indicated his intention that, over the next two years, the three parishes of Charlestown be combined into one new parish. Most



recently, Archbishop O'Malley met with 18 pastors whose parishes were scheduled to close between mid-November and mid-January and offered them the opportunity to extend their parish closing dates. The Archbishop felt it would be important to offer additional time to facilitate transition to the receiving parishes, to plan for the best use of the receiving parishes' facilities in welcoming their new parishioners and to provide additional assistance to the parishioners who are finding this process particularly difficult. Any pastor requesting an extension was granted a temporary reprieve.