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Petition for Hierarchical Recourse against the reduction of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church to  
Profane but not Sordid Use

Dear Archbishop Etienne,

In accordance with the provisions of Canon 1734, Sections 1 and 2, I and the others who have signed this letter are writing to inform you that we are formally bringing a petition for hierarchical recourse against the decree you issued on June 2, 2023, the object of which is the reduction of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Tacoma to profane but not sordid use. Each of those bringing this petition for hierarchical recourse against your decree does so as an individual and as a Catholic domiciled within the boundaries of St. John XXIII Parish. Thus, each of the signatories to this petition for hierarchical recourse has standing to bring this appeal. Each of those signing this petition for hierarchical recourse does so as an individual Catholic and not as a member or officer of any group or organization of any type. This petition for hierarchical recourse is being personally delivered to the offices of the Archdiocese of Seattle prior to June 12, 2023, the last such day in accordance with the computation of "useful time" under canon law during which a petition for hierarchical recourse against this decree can be brought.

**I: REVIEW OF THE ACTIONS OF THE LAST 45 MONTHS**

As your Excellency is well aware, this petition for hierarchical recourse is not the first which has been brought before you concerning the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Tacoma. In September 2019, I brought a previous petition for hierarchical recourse to you against a decree promulgated by your predecessor in office shortly before his departure, (Archbishop James Peter Sartain,) in which I argued that a grave cause did not in fact exist sufficient to justify the actions that decree ordered, namely the relegation of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to profane but not sordid use and its demolition. For 45 months prior to your rejection of my previous appeal through your promulgation of this new decree, it was my sincere hope that you would meet with me and those working to find a solution for the future of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary which would allow it to remain a Catholic sacred space even if it could not remain a parish church or a secondary church of St. John XXIII Parish of Tacoma. At no time have you chosen to meet with me, Jonathan Carp, Attorney Jack Connelly, or any of those Catholics who have in their personal capacities sought through communications with officials of the Archdiocese of Seattle to begin a dialogue aimed at averting canonical litigation. It is truly unfortunate that you were not willing to personally work toward bringing into a being the solution which was presented to the archdiocese and which will be discussed later in this appeal, a solution which if implemented would give all parties involved in this situation much of what they are seeking in my opinion and which would avert the need for the relegation of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to profane but not sordid use.

**II THE PRESENT DECREE BEING APPEALED AGAINST**

While many points are made in this decree, it seems to be the case that the sole cause of sufficient gravity upon which it is alleged that the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary must be relegated to profane but not sordid use is the lack of funding on the part of St. John XXIII Parish to make necessary repairs to the structure. The decree makes note of the costs it is alleged will be incurred to make necessary repairs to the church and the fact that some plaster fell within the church. The decree does not however acknowledge the fact however that the Parish of St. John XXIII is not the only entity which under canon law is able to raise such funds as would be necessary to repair the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, nor does it make note of the fact that the church can remain a Catholic sacred space without being relegated to profane but not sordid use while being owned by an entity which is not St. John XXIII Parish or any parish for that matter. Furthermore, at no time prior to Archbishop Sartain's decision to promulgate the decree he issued to relegate the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to profane but not sordid use does it appear that he sought to follow the requirements set down by the Dicastery for the Clergy with regard to churches no longer needed by the entities which own them that must be followed prior to the decision being taken to relegate them to profane but not sordid use. I bring this point up because in spite of the fact that the requirements which apply in this case were brought to your attention at the time I filed my previous appeal, it appears you likewise did not follow them prior to promulgating this decree which I am now appealing against.

This petition for hierarchical recourse argues above all other things that it is in fact not the case that all viable alternative options for funding which would have permitted the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to remain standing and serve as a Catholic sacred space were in fact explored prior to this decree's promulgation. Given that alternative sources of funding were not explored and that the Archdiocese of Seattle actively precluded entities other than St. John XXIII Parish from stepping in to ensure that the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary could remain a Catholic sacred space, the cited cause of sufficient gravity which is being used to justify the church's relegation to profane but not sordid use cannot be said to have been proven to exist. It is my contention that there is not in fact a proven lack of funds for repairing the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, and that if those funds available to make this possible were tapped, the church could continue to remain a Catholic sacred space with no detrimental impact to St. John XXIII Parish, whether as part of the parish or under other canonically valid arrangements. Throughout this decree reference is continually made to St. John XXIII Parish, and its inability to fund the restoration of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church and to continue to maintain the church in the future. The lack of acknowledgement of the alternative plan presented to the leadership of St. John XXIII Parish and to officials of the Archdiocese of Seattle which would allow for the church to be restored and remain a Catholic sacred space (either as a "shrine," "chapel," or "oratory",) regardless of the church's affiliation with St. John XXIII Parish, shows that not all other alternatives to closure have truly been explored.

It is without question the case that Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church is one of the most beautiful structures in the city of Tacoma and within the Archdiocese of Seattle as a whole. Erected by descendants of the early German Catholic settlers of Tacoma in 1920, the church was built in such a way as to illustrate not only their concrete belief in God, but also to serve by virtue of its location as a literal beacon of the Catholic faith to all who might pass by and look upon it. This beacon of the faith, like so many churches constructed with the intent that the beauty of their sacred art and architecture might draw soles more deeply to Christ and even draw individuals to the faith who might have had no other contact with Catholicism, has done just that. We are aware of individuals who have stated that their

initial experience with the sacred art and architecture of both the interior and exterior of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary caused them to begin the RCIA process. Their interaction with this beautiful church proved to be the spark which led them to embrace the fullness of the Catholic faith. It is an objective fact that not all churches are built in the same way that the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary has been constructed. It is thus all the more profoundly disturbing to me as I bring this petition for hierarchical recourse to you your Excellency that this beacon of the faith in Tacoma may be wiped from the face of the earth, eliminating one of the best tools of evangelization available in this part of the archdiocese to bring soles to the faith in an era when evangelization is more necessary than ever.

I argue that a viable plan for the restoration and retention of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary as a Roman Catholic sacred space, based on similar plans which have proven to be successful in many dozens of similar cases exists, and that it has in spite of statements to the contrary not yet been seriously considered (if it has even been considered at all) by the leadership of the Parish of St. John XXIII or the Archdiocese of Seattle. If this plan were allowed to proceed, it would eliminate the cause of sufficient gravity being cited as justification for the relegation of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to profane but not sordid use, thereby making its demolition both unnecessary and impossible and allowing the church to remain as a Catholic sacred space, in accordance with the canonical definition of a church building contained in Canon 1214 of the Code of Canon Law of 1983.

Prior to drafting the petition for hierarchical recourse I brought four years ago, I became familiar with a set of guidelines promulgated by the Congregation for the Clergy of the Holy See, the dicastery (department) which among other things is responsible for hearing appeals of decisions to relegate church buildings to profane but not sordid use when they are first made to the Holy See. Since 2019, the Congregation for the Clergy has been renamed as you are likely aware the Dicastery for the Clergy. I will restate what I said four years ago concerning the guidelines in question, because it seems that nothing I said at that time concerning these guidelines was taken into consideration prior to the promulgation of the decree I am bringing this petition for hierarchical recourse against.

The guidelines I am referencing are divided into three sections; addressing the closure of parishes, the relegation of churches to profane but not sordid use, and the sale of churches. It is to sections two and three of this document which I make reference in this petition for hierarchical recourse; I enclose a copy of this document with this appeal. In Part G of section 2 of these guidelines (the section concerning the relegation of churches to profane but not sordid use,) paragraph G makes note of the fact that when a church is being relegated to profane but not sordid use on account of the financial condition of the juridic person which owns it (a parish or another juridic person,) all other sources of possible funding which would allow the church to continue to exist as a Roman Catholic place of even occasional worship must be found lacking or inadequate. In spite of this admonition from the dicastery, I state in bringing this petition for hierarchical recourse that the decree I am challenging did not even attempt to illustrate that other sources of funding were found lacking or inadequate to allow Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church to remain a Catholic sacred space, and thus that this decree is defective and invalid.

I point out that this decree I am challenging is entirely predicated upon the premise that St. John XXIII Parish is the sole entity which would or could undertake the restoration of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in order that it can remain a Catholic sacred space. At no point in this decree are alternative sources of funding which exist and which could if given the opportunity to do so allow for the Church of

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to be restored and retained as a Catholic sacred space mentioned. Thus, those bringing this petition for hierarchical recourse are forced to conclude based on the lack of reference to alternative sources of funding and the actions which took place prior to this decree's promulgation that they were in fact not fully considered.

While it is true that Our Lady of the Holy Rosary "Church" was constructed in 1920 to serve as the seat of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary "Parish," it is also true that service as a parochial church is not the only purpose for which a church can exist. It is the case that throughout the history of the Roman Catholic Church, individual churches have at points in their history had the purpose for which they existed altered based upon various factors. A church built to serve as a parish church could at some point later be designated as a shrine, a chapel, or an oratory. Similarly, a church built to serve as a shrine church, a chapel or an oratory could see its designation changed to that of a parish church were it to be the case that circumstances in the area in which the church might be located would necessitate its utilization for this purpose. One need only look at those churches existent in Rome, a city which I understand your Excellency undertook your theological studies in as a seminarian to find numerous cases of churches assuming a canonically valid purpose other than that for which they were constructed at some point during their history. Just as it is the case that the churches of the eternal city have at times seen their canonical designations change, so too is it the case that numerous other churches throughout the world have likewise continued to exist as Roman Catholic sacred spaces with different canonical designations from that which they held on the day of their dedication.

I would note that my research indicates that over eighty former parish churches located throughout the United States, in Canada and also in Australia are presently being cared for by groups of Catholics who have formed to raise the funds necessary to provide for their repair and continued maintenance independent of the dioceses/archdioceses and parishes in which they are located. Born of a recognition by all parties involved that the churches in question could no longer serve as parish churches for various reasons, parish and diocesan leaders embraced the opportunity to work with those Catholics who were prepared to expend such time and energy as would be necessary to make it possible for their former parish churches to remain Roman Catholic Sacred spaces, available for such purposes as private prayer, the recitation of the rosary and the occasional celebration of the mass. The diocesan and archdiocesan ordinaries who entered into these agreements recognized the fact that churches are sacred spaces and understood the faith would benefit from the presence of former Roman Catholic parish churches which none the less retained their status as Roman Catholic sacred spaces. They also understood that canon law requires that any viable plan which would permit a Catholic church to remain a sacred space must be implemented, as the Dicastery for the Clergy reaffirmed in its guidelines of 2013 that churches must retain their sacred character "if at all possible."

In addition to the groups noted above, it is also the case that if one travels down the Pacific coast some distance south of Seattle into California, they will come upon a chain of very historic churches known as the California Missions. These churches, originally outposts of the Franciscan religious order have not only undergone many changes in canonical status since the days of their construction, in many cases today groups of lay Catholics help to ensure their continued existence. Owing to the near constant need for funds to be raised in order to repair and restore these historic churches, the religious leaders who oversee them have been very happy to embrace the willingness of Catholics from California and points far beyond it to organize nonprofit groups whose purpose is to raise from beyond the local area and Catholic community such funds as are necessary to ensure that the missions, churches which were

nearly all de facto relegated to profane but not sordid use by virtue of their expropriation by civil authorities for non-Catholic sacred uses, remain in as well preserved of a state as possible, to ensure that their sacred character is not lost again. Nearly all of the California Missions remain Roman Catholic sacred spaces, in spite of earthquakes and other disasters, both natural and manmade which might have erased them from the map, in large part due to donations received toward their care and upkeep that come from far beyond the areas in which they are located. Some doubtless asked at the time the missions were returned to Catholic authorities in varying states of disrepair what the point of expending money on their restoration was. Others likely asked the same question regarding individual missions over the years, as they faced challenges ranging from crumbling adobe walls to the difficulties associated with seismic retrofitting, the latter challenge being one which faces Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in Tacoma at present. A multitude of arguments could have been made that the funds spent on the care and restoration of the California Missions might have been better spent on any number of purposes. The fact remains however that sacred space, in spite of its inability to address a specific material need a disadvantaged person might face, is crucial to the world and the growth and stability of the faith. Jesus himself did not rebuke Mary for anointing his feet with perfume, perfume which could of course have been sold as many argued for some other purpose.

I am aware your Excellency that just as other Catholics have stepped forward to care for former parish churches and the California Missions, so too is a group of the faithful prepared at present to step forward and ensure that the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary is restored as a Roman Catholic sacred space and that it remains one in perpetuity. This appeal is not being brought on behalf of "Save Tacoma's Landmark Church," or any other Catholics who have not signed it who may be working either independently or in groups to bring alternatives to the permanent closure of the church into being. Those bringing this petition for hierarchical recourse, however, are aware of the efforts of Save Tacoma's Landmark Church, and those of Attorney Jack Connelly working on his own behalf. In spite of nearly four years having elapsed since I last wrote that all of these efforts were being seemingly ignored by you and the Archdiocese of Seattle, it still seems this is a true statement.

Just as in the other cases referenced above, I am aware that great strides have been made toward raising the funds necessary to restore Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church as a Roman Catholic sacred space over the course of the last four years. In fact, several efforts have been made between 2019 and the present day to reach out to Ms. Leigh Stringfellow and the leadership of St. John XXIII Parish to discuss the purchase of the property of the former Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, including the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church. It is a purchase of the property which it is claimed St. John XXIII Parish desires. In spite of these attempts to open discussions toward this end, at no time have anything more than perfunctory responses been received. Given the desire on the part of those Catholics who seek to purchase the property to retain the church strictly as a Catholic sacred space, there would be no need to relegate the church to profane but not sordid use if a sale to such a party were to be undertaken. I thus must ask, why are these attempts to open discussions regarding a sale being ignored on the part of the Archdiocese of Seattle and the leadership of St. John XXIII Parish? I am aware that lay Catholics who have established a validly constituted nonprofit entity have the right to own a Catholic church which has not been relegated to profane but not sordid use, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed between such a group and the local ordinary of the jurisdiction in which the church in question is located. Such is made clear by the fact that it is only possible to validly relegate a church to profane but not sordid use under canon law if it can be proven that no funds from any source are available to restore

and maintain it. As a Roman Catholic place of worship, and that no group is prepared to assume ownership of the church in order that it can continue to exist as a Catholic sacred space, regardless of how frequently beyond the twice guaranteed per year mass may be celebrated within it.

I would make note of the fact that in cases similar to that of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church, diocesan and archdiocesan ordinaries who have been willing to work with Catholics committed to restoring Catholic churches in order that they could be retained as Catholic sacred spaces have facilitated what might once have been the unthinkable rebirth of what by all appearances was a dead and decaying former parish church destined without question for demolition. In the late 1970s, St. Joseph's Church in the city of St. Louis MO was in an advanced state of decay, with birds flying freely through the broken stained glass windows which lined the nave and tons of bird droppings clogging its historic organ. The final pastor of St. Joseph Parish had been murdered in the parish rectory by individuals intent on committing a robbery and leaving no witnesses. By any measure, the neighborhood around St. Joseph's Church was unsafe, and it was not surprising that the Archdiocese of St. Louis had determined that St. Joseph's Church should be demolished and replaced with a parking lot.

Catholic residents of St. Louis, some of them descended from the Germans who built St. Joseph's Church however did not want to see the church meet this fate. Forming a nonprofit organization called the "Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends," these Catholics approached the Archbishop of St. Louis and asked for the chance to attempt to raise all of the funds necessary on their own to restore the church to the glory it enjoyed following its dedication in the late 1840s. Archbishop May gave the group permission to do this in 1980, and after a number of years and incredibly hard work, the Church of St. Joseph was restored and designated as a Shrine to St. Joseph which continues to stand in St. Louis today. Archbishop May could simply have pushed forward with plans to demolish the church, dismissing proposals to restore it and retain it as a Catholic sacred place as nothing more than wishful thinking that could never become reality, much as the Archdiocese of Seattle seems to be doing now with respect to plans to restore the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary. Many ordinaries have done just that over the years. He saw though the benefits of giving those who wanted to save the Church of St. Joseph as a Roman Catholic sacred space the opportunity to do so rather than forcing its demolition, and we think you will agree with us that the continued presence of the Shrine of St. Joseph in St. Louis today, maintained by the Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends at no expense to the Archdiocese of St. Louis, is of great spiritual benefit to that city and the Catholic faithful generally.

The story of the Shrine of St. Joseph in St. Louis is not the only example of a diocesan ordinary giving a group a chance to restore what would seem to be a church degraded beyond any hope of a future. Shortly before I filed my last appeal, in July of 2019, the St. Anne Shrine Preservation Society of Fall River MA, a nonprofit group made up of lay Catholics was given a ten year lease by the Bishop of the Diocese of Fall River for the Church of St. Anne, with the understanding that like the group in St. Louis, the future of the church would depend on their success. St. Anne Church in Fall River opened in 1906 as the parochial church of St. Anne Parish, the main French Canadian personal parish in the city. Like Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church, St. Anne Church is a dominant feature of the skyline in the city of Fall River. The church is extremely large; the upper church seats 2000 people and there is a shrine to St. Anne in the church's basement. Many other similarities exist between St. Anne Church in Fall River and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in Tacoma. Conditions in the neighborhoods surrounding the churches have changed drastically since the time they were built, leaving far fewer Catholics in their immediate vicinity. The total cost of repairs to St. Anne Church is projected to be \$13.5 million, not terribly far from the

projected cost for repairs to the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary (though I am advised that other engineers who are aware of the condition of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church do not believe it will be this costly to reopen it.)

None of this however dissuaded those who formed the St. Anne Shrine Preservation Society from stepping forward with an unswerving commitment to take whatever action was necessary to ensure that St. Anne Church was fully restored and that it serves in the future solely as a shrine to St. Anne. Those who proposed to Bishop Edgar M. da Cunha of Fall River that they be given the opportunity to restore St. Anne Church at their own expense knew that this would not mean it would function as a regular parish any longer. Those who wish to undertake the same project for the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary are similarly aware that if they succeed, this does not automatically mean that Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish will return to its previous existence. Like Archbishop May, Bishop da Cunha believed it was worth giving those who stepped forward with a desire to retain St. Anne Church as a Roman Catholic sacred space the opportunity to make this possible, and for that reason he entered into a lease with the St. Anne Shrine Preservation Society. Since the submission of my previous appeal, much progress has been made by those working to restore St. Anne Church in Fall River MA, and a capital campaign aimed at raising funding to continue repairs to the church is well under way.

#### **“DISCERNMENT”**

Finally, I wish to take time to comment on the “discernment” which a letter states was undertaken by various individuals affiliated with St. John XXIII Parish prior to this decree which I am appealing being issued. The letter which describes this discernment is beyond vague in my opinion and makes it impossible to understand what sort of discernment truly took place. My points here are far more than mere issues with word choice. I sincerely question whether it can be objectively said that those who were undertaking discussions concerning the future of the property of the former Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, including Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church, can be said to have both truly explored all options associated for the church’s future, and furthermore whether they even understood the totality of options in this regard which exist. Based on the contents of the letter which describes the process they undertook, I am very much doubtful on both of these points. This letter makes it objectively clear that the metric used to determine the future of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary was the combined feelings of those who assembled to undertake discussions, not including Catholics who are most committed to the church’s sacred Catholic future. The most glaring example of feeling not grounded in law being allowed to govern is shown when the letter stated the following: “The group discussed the option of having a donor or a group fund the \$18 million. We debated: would it be most prudent to repair one church building serving a small community of the faithful when there are other spiritual and social needs of the newly formed PSJXXIII? Additionally, we discussed how there would not be enough priests within PSJXXIII to provide services at Holy Rosary and how selling only a portion of the property did not make financial sense once all the numbers penciled out.”

These sentences illustrate as clearly as anything ever could that those empowered by you to determine the fate of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Tacoma fundamentally and completely lacked even the most basic grasp on those factors which must be present to determine whether conditions exist to justify the relegation of a church to profane but not sordid use, the rights of Catholics to maintain sacred churches at their own expense, and the conditions under which a Catholic church can be sold. The Dicastery for the Clergy has made abundantly clear in its guidelines of 2013 that

the sale of churches as Catholic sacred spaces, without relegation to profane but not sordid use, to entities committed to continuing to utilize them solely for Catholic sacred worship, is always preferred over sales of churches for any other purpose. The letter distributed on the discernment which took place in this instance clearly illustrates that those discerning weren't even aware this was an option, let alone that it is always to be preferred that a Catholic church pass into the hands of another entity committed to utilizing it for Catholic worship at the time its sale is being contemplated. Furthermore, the individuals who discerned the future of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church were likewise unaware that it isn't up to them or anyone else whether a donor who wishes to spend their money to restore a church is able to do so. A catholic who wishes to restore a Catholic church at their own expense in order to allow it to continue to exist as a Catholic sacred space has the right to do this. By the logic employed by those discerning, it is literally and absolutely the case that St. Francis of Assisi would have been banned from undertaking the restoration of the Portiuncula; what a different history the last 800 years of Catholicism would have were this to have been the case. The availability of priests from St. John XXIII Parish to conduct any activities at the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in the event it was no longer part of the parish is completely irrelevant. The fact that these points were not grasped by those undertaking discussions surrounding the future of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary is profoundly disturbing in my opinion, as these are the points above all others which have to be considered in situations such as this one.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is truly unfortunate Archbishop Etienne that I have had to come back to you under these conditions to appeal yet another decree aimed at relegating Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in Tacoma to profane but not sordid use. I do not mean to be unnecessarily harsh in this petition for hierarchical recourse, but those issues which it has had to address are issues which could have been so easily avoided. Ample time has existed over the course of the past 45 months to undertake discussions which could have easily lead to a different set of circumstances being present in Tacoma concerning the fate of this church. Instead, discussions with those who have taken the lead in working to avert the relegation of the church to profane but not sordid use have not occurred, and the appearance exists of a process being undertaken to provide a cover to justify the continued desire to eliminate it from the Catholic landscape of Tacoma and the Archdiocese of Seattle as a whole. The Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary stands as an enduring testament to the faith of the German Catholics who built it, as a standing invitation to all who see it to enter and consider what it has to say to them about the Catholic faith. Moving forward with the relegation of this church to profane but not sordid use, in contravention of canon law, the jurisprudence of the Holy See and in spite of the presence of Catholics who are prepared to assume ownership of the church in order that it can remain a Catholic sacred space will leave deep and completely avoidable wounds in the Tacoma area, not only in the hearts and minds of the Catholics resident there but also in the hearts and minds of anyone who was in any way moved by this church.

Given the actions which have (and more importantly haven't) transpired over the past 45 months, namely the unwillingness of the Archdiocese of Seattle to engage with those Catholics who are prepared to assume the cost and responsibility of maintaining and restoring the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary as a Catholic sacred space, it is abundantly clear that not all alternatives to the church's relegation to profane but not sordid use and demolition were considered by either St. John XXIII Parish or the Archdiocese of Seattle prior to your promulgating this decree. No cause of sufficient gravity to justify the relegation of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to profane but not sordid use in



accordance with either section one or section two of Canon 1222 of the Code of Canon Law of 1983 is in fact present. Moreover, the deliberations of those at St. John XXIII Parish charged by you with determining the future of the church illustrated through the letter which was released concerning the discernment on the issue they undertook that their understanding of the task they were charged with undertaking and the options available to them to complete it was unfortunately quite inadequate. The most bizarre aspect of this situation is that the Parish of St. John XXIII and the Archdiocese of Seattle by extension want the entirety of the property of the former Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, including the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary to be sold, but seemingly only for non-Catholic purposes, jurisprudence of the Holy See to the contrary notwithstanding. I cannot understand why it is the case that there is such resistance to doing with the law requires be done here in the case that St. John XXIII Parish no longer wishes to own this church, i.e. selling it to Catholics who will continue to maintain it as a Catholic sacred space. Such makes no sense; it makes even less sense when one considers that during the time when canonical litigation is under way concerning the church that St. John XXIII parish will be precluded from removing anything from it and will be required to shoulder all of the costs associated with its continued maintenance. Sale of the property and its listing for sale will not be possible until this canonical litigation ends. Wouldn't it be the case if a sale is what is truly desired that logic and sensibility would dictate engagement with those Catholics who wish to fund the retention of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary as a Catholic sacred space would be a good idea?

I call upon you Archbishop Etienne to reach out to me and those Catholics who truly have a desire to work with you to resolve the future of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church, once and for all, in order to arrive at a solution which will satisfy in large part the objectives of all involved. I am quite confident such a solution exists. I thank you for taking the time to read this appeal; please know you are in my prayers as are all of the clergy and religious of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Sincerely,