



The Redemptorists OF THE BALTIMORE PROVINCE

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Provincial Statement Regarding the Future of St. Michael's/St. Patrick's Parish

From Baltimore Provincial Patrick Woods, C.Ss.R.

The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province have been serving at St. Michael the Archangel Parish since 1852. What started as a primarily German-speaking community eventually became an English-speaking parish, and more recently has attracted a large Hispanic community.

We Redemptorists have been most grateful for the great faith and support of the many people we have been blessed to serve through the years. We are proud of the great tradition we continue to have in supporting the faith of new immigrants while, at the same time, nurturing the faith of those who have been part of the parish community for a longer period of time.

Supporting the faith of new immigrants to our nation is one of the primary missions of our Congregation, and it was a mission dear to two of our great confreres who served in the Archdiocese of Baltimore: St. John Neumann and Blessed Francis Seelos.

Several months ago, we informed the Archdiocese that we could no longer sustain the cost of maintaining the magnificent church and buildings at St. Michael's. Consultants informed us that it would cost millions of dollars just to maintain the properties so that they would be safe and functional.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore was most understanding of our position, and told us our ministry in the Archdiocese was most appreciated. They hoped we could continue our presence in the City of Baltimore, in particular our outreach to the Hispanic community.

Recognizing that the Redemptorists are also serving at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Highlandtown, we began to dialogue about the possibility of inviting the community from St. Michael's to move to Sacred Heart.

Sacred Heart also has a beautiful church and a large parking lot. There is ample space for a variety of programs.

It is the desire of both the Redemptorists and the Archdiocese that there be one Catholic community at Sacred Heart that serves all the parishioners. At the same time, the

Redemptorists would continue to maintain St. Patrick's Church as a chapel of Sacred Heart that would provide liturgy on the weekends, and perhaps during the week.

It is clear to me that both the Archdiocese of Baltimore and the Redemptorists want to serve God's people as faithfully as we can. We are fully aware that it is never easy for people to lose a church that they love and in which they have formed deep spiritual bonds. We also recognize that blending two different parish communities can be equally challenging. However, we all share the bond of unity in Jesus Christ and the Eucharist. Over time, we are convinced that this process will bring life to all the faithful of the various communities involved.

We ask for your trust in us and we promise to do all we can to continue to provide faithful pastoral service as we have done for well over a century. I want to say how grateful the Redemptorists are for their ongoing support and encouragement of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in seeking to move forward in this pastoral project.