



Diocese of Worcester
Office of the Bishop
49 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

March 12, 2011

Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past two months, the Diocese retained professional structural engineers and contractors to study the condition and integrity of the many and various buildings which comprise Notre Dame of the Sacred Heart Parish. This was done to assist the pastoral planning process, since in the past, various opinions have been voiced about the conditions of buildings.

Following this professional analysis, a report was shared with your parish leadership about the results of the findings. Specifically, Sacred Heart of Jesus campus would require significant structural repairs for continued use. These kinds of repairs are beyond the scope of an already financially stressed community.

I know that the process of choosing one beloved church over another can be hurtful in a parish. In pastoral charity, I have made the decision that in the near future Sacred Heart of Jesus Church should no longer be used, given the enormous strain two churches place on your parish resources.

Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee will assist your parish leadership in the coming weeks regarding when and how this transition will occur in order to be pastorally sensitive to the grieving process that comes with the loss of such a beautiful church. I ask that all parishioners of Notre Dame of the Sacred Heart Parish, and all Catholics in the Town of Southbridge, assist in this transition in any way they can, particularly in offering comfort and support to those members in need. We are one community of faith who are united in our baptismal call to bring Christ's love and healing comfort to anyone in need.

May our prayers during this Season of Lent bring us the courage and strength to face this challenge as a faith community which knows the hope of new life at Easter.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, S.T.D.
Bishop of Worcester