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July 1, 2016

Appeal of Both the Decree to Suppress St. Adalbert Parish and the Decree to Relegate St.
Adalbert Church to Profane but Not Sordid Use

Dear Cardinal Stella,

In accordance with the provisions of Canon 1734, Section 2, I and the others who have signed this appeal write to inform you that we are bringing a petition for canonical recourse to your dicastery against the decrees issued by Archbishop Blasé Joseph Cupich of the Archdiocese of Chicago in the State of Illinois in the United States of America to suppress St. Adalbert Parish, located within the city of Chicago, and to relegate to profane but not sordid use the Church of St. Adalbert, parish church of the same St. Adalbert's parish in the City of Chicago which is being suppressed. We bring this appeal as parishioners of St. Adalbert's Parish, and communicants of St. Adalbert's Church. These decrees were communicated to us at the masses held in St. Adalbert's Church on Sunday, May 29, 2016. In accordance with Canon 201, Section 2, the time limit for filing this appeal began running from that time, as we were unaware of the existence of the decrees prior to that date. On June 8, 2016, within the window of 10 useful days available for bringing recourse against both decrees, we filed appeals against both of Archbishop Cupich's decrees with the archbishop. On Friday June 17, 2016, Mr. Richard Olszewski learned that Archbishop Cupich had rejected without comment both appeals, in writing, and had refused to suspend the decrees he had previously issued (see the letter of rejection transmitted to Mr. Olszewski by Archbishop Cupich.) We thus bring this petition for canonical recourse to you and your congregation against these decrees issued by Archbishop Cupich, within the limit of 15 useful days beginning on the date when Mr. Olszewski received notification of the rejection of our initial appeal to Archbishop Cupich (June 17, 2016.) We thus request the suspension and revocation of these decrees, on multiple grounds. Most notably, it seems to be the case that his Excellency Archbishop Cupich fails to understand both the meaning of relegating a church to profane but not sordid use, and the conditions under which this action should be undertaken. While we welcome the continued celebration of mass at St. Adalbert's Church (plans for which are enclosed,) we make note of the fact that the entire point of relegating a church to profane but not sordid use is to end its status as a sacred building, and thus its ability to serve as a site of regular mass. This seems not to be grasped by the Chicago Archdiocese. Further, in seeking to extinguish St. Adalbert Parish, we believe that Archbishop Cupich misapplied the term "suppress," as the action which is being taken does not equate to the actual suppression of a parish as defined by the Congregation for the Clergy in the instructions it promulgated on April 30, 2013, regarding the closure of parishes and churches. It is also the case that in the early part of the last decade, actions taken by the parish's then pastor directly contributed to the financial degradation of the parish, leaving it in a poorer financial state than would have been the case were such actions not taken. In any case, it has been several years since St. Adalbert's Parish has run a deficit. Furthermore, no mention is made within the decree promulgated to extinguish St. Adalbert's parish of the care that will be provided the Polish speaking parishioners who are still served by the parish. Additionally with regard to the

decree issued to relegate St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use, a multitude of issues demand its revocation. Archbishop Cupich's claim that no funds of any type exist to make repairs to St. Adalbert's church is wholly and completely incorrect, and it is astonishing to consider that Archbishop Cupich might not have been aware of this. A detailed report prepared by Mr. Olszewski and others was transmitted to him several weeks before he issued the decrees which are presently being appealed, which stated that well over \$1 million is presently on hand to make such repairs, and that additional fundraising is being undertaken by a private group established to save the church as a Catholic place of worship. Fundraising has been hampered for some time by the actions of the parish pastor who has threatened Mr. Olszewski and others with criminal or civil charges of fraud and the imminent demolition of the church should appeals against its closure be made, and who is actively pushing a proposal which would result in the liquidation of the St. Adalbert's Parish campus, including the church, to the benefit of the other parish which he leads. Long before this decree was issued, Archbishop Cupich personally stated that the archdiocese was looking for someone to "purchase" St. Adalbert's Church, (in a May 4, 2016 interview on the television program "Chicago Tonight,") which calls into question what sort of consultation was actually conducted with the presbyteral council in this matter. The archbishop's claim that the church's towers are structurally unsound is likewise incorrect. It is incredible furthermore that the decree relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use is dated one day after the decree issued to extinguish St. Adalbert's Parish, and that the decree eliminating the parish stated the church would remain a sacred space, available for mass. Owing to the issues present within each of these decrees, we call upon your eminence and this dicastery to suspend and revoke these decrees.

I, Concerning the decree issued to close St. Adalbert's Parish

We are aware of the set of instructions your dicastery issued on April 30, 2013, detailing under what circumstances a parish and a church building can be closed. In section one of this document, four types of actions which would result in the alteration of parish boundaries, including the elimination of a parish were spelled out. In the decree issued to eliminate St. Adalbert's Parish, it was stated that St. Adalbert's parish would be "suppressed." Based on your congregation's instructions, and what Archbishop Cupich's decree states is occurring in this case, this term does not seem to be the correct one to describe the action being taken, given the ultimate outcome the decree seems to seek to bring about. The instructions of your dicastery state that Suppression is understood to be an action in which no parish will exist in a territory once a parish is eliminated (Official Documents of the Holy See: Letter From the Congregation for the Clergy and Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes and the Closure, Relegation and Alienation of Churches, 73 Jurist, 211, 2013, pp. 214, paragraph C, example IV.) It appears that the terms which should have been used within the decree eliminating St. Adalbert's Parish were either "merge" or "amalgamate." As a parish (St. Paul's,) will certainly remain following the elimination of St. Adalbert's Parish, according to this decree (Jurist, pp. 214, paragraph C, examples I and II.) Given that the instructions state that "imprecision" cannot be allowed for in canonical documents, we believe Archbishop Cupich's decree eliminating St. Adalbert's Parish is thus flawed, and must either be amended or revoked (Jurist, pp. 214, paragraph C.)

In a decision regarding the closure of St. Joseph's Parish in Poughkeepsie NY that was issued earlier this year (a decision that reaffirmed the fact that St. Joseph's Church was not automatically closed at the time the parish was eliminated,) your congregation made clear among other things that care must be provided for all of the various ethnic and linguistic groups which were formerly served by a parish that has been eliminated. Like St. Adalbert's

Parish, St. Joseph's Parish in Poughkeepsie NY was also established to serve Roman Catholics of Polish descent, and just as in the case of St. Adalbert's Parish, a number of members of the St. Joseph Congregation were still Polish at the time of the parish's closure. In its ruling, your dicastery made note of the fact that the decree issued by the Archdiocese of New York to close St. Joseph's Parish did not expressly provide for the continuation of services for the Polish members of St. Joseph Parish following its elimination, and that such was an error on the part of the Archdiocese of New York. Likewise, the decree eliminating St. Adalbert's Parish does not provide explicitly for the continued care of the parish's Polish parishioners following July 1. A monthly mass in Polish is still celebrated At St. Adalbert's Church on behalf of St. Adalbert's Parish, and no provisions were made for the continued celebration of this mass following July 1 in any location according to the decree. Thus, we believe this fact causes the decree to be flawed, and we would ask your eminence to amend or revoke it.

Furthermore, the Archdiocese of Chicago has made no effort to address the systemic issues which contributed to the financial situation of St. Adalbert's Parish as it exists today. Shortly after arriving at the parish in 2000, Fr. Michael Michelini added additional staff positions within the parish, some of which were filled by parishioners who seem to have come from Fr. Michelini's previous parish assignment. The addition of these extra staff positions, which some of us believed were completely unnecessary, drained parish finances. Parishioners brought forward their concerns regarding these additional expenses to Fr. Michelini and Bishop John Manz, the auxiliary bishop who was then overseeing the vicariate of the Archdiocese of Chicago in which St. Adalbert Parish is located. These concerns were not addressed, and St. Adalbert's parish resources continued to be drained. We give Fr. Michael Enright credit for helping to stem the financial hemorrhaging upon his arrival through a study of how operations within the parish could be made more efficient, and through the institution of a lay finance council, a body which had not previously existed within the parish. In spite of these actions however, no action was taken to attempt to ameliorate the damage brought about to the parish's finances on account of the actions of the former pastor. We believe that given our attempts to put a stop to unnecessary spending in past years, and the lack of prompt action that was taken at the time to bring it to a stop, that St. Adalbert's Parish should be given additional time to put its financial house in order and demonstrate that the parish's financial situation is being unfairly impacted by decisions which parishioners were expressly instructed to not become involved in. For all of these reasons, we ask your Eminence and your dicastery to suspend or revoke the decree issued to permanently close St. Adalbert Parish.

II, Concerning the decree relegating St. Adalbert's Church to "profane but not sordid use."

We now address the second decree that was issued, that intended to reduce St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use. We view this decree as the most problematic of the two, and the most in need of revocation, for the following reasons. The second main purpose of the instructions your dicastery promulgated on April 30, 2013, was to clarify under what circumstances justification exists for the relegation of a Catholic church building to "profane but not sordid use." In Section 2 of this document, it is made clear that a church building should retain its "sacred character if at all possible," with only the presence of a "grave reason" justifying its relegation to profane but not sordid use. (Jurist, pp. 216, "Closure of Churches/Relegation of Churches to Profane but not Sordid Use," paragraph C.) It is further stated in these instructions that when considering the relegation of a church building to profane but not sordid use, on account of the financial insufficiency of the funds of the parish in which it is located to care for it, that "it must be demonstrated that other reasonable sources of funding or assistance have been considered and found lacking or inadequate." (Jurist, pp. 217, paragraph F.) The instructions further state that the lack of

need of a particular church building on the part of the parish in which it is located is not in and of itself a reason of sufficient gravity to justify its relegation to profane but not sordid use (Jurist, pp. 217, Paragraph H, line III.) In attempting to justify his desire to relegate St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use, Archbishop Cupich seems to have attempted to touch upon all of the above mentioned points, as well as others, as reasons of sufficient gravity to justify his decision. Such is however impossible, as conditions justifying the relegation of St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use simply do not exist.

Finances lie at the heart of several of the issues being cited as reasons of sufficient gravity to justify the relegation to profane but not sordid use of St. Adalbert's Church. It is stated in the archbishop's decree that "there are now no funds available from the Archdiocese of Chicago or other known source to repair and maintain St. Adalbert Church for divine worship or as a center for any apostolic or charitable purpose of the church." It is beyond incomprehensible to us how the archbishop could even consider making such a statement, let alone putting it into writing, when he has been made aware on multiple occasions in different ways, including through the media, that over \$1.2 million has been present for months to begin repairs, and that other funds are being gathered. In March of this year, a generous parishioner stepped forward to offer a donation of \$1.2 million to be used toward the repair of St. Adalbert's Church. The donor also indicated that they would be able to donate additional funds to the effort in the future. At the time this donation was made, officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago communicated that it would not be sufficient to save St. Adalbert's parish, and the money was returned to the donor. Regardless of whether it would have saved the parish, this donation alone could pay for many of the most critical repairs to St. Adalbert's Church, an issue the archdiocese failed to acknowledge or address at that time. As was illustrated by the archbishop through his issuance of separate decrees, St. Adalbert's Parish and Church are two entirely different entities requiring different types and degrees of causation to justify their elimination. We are grateful that he recognize this, though we point out that in all previous correspondence transmitted to St. Adalbert parishioners by the archdiocese, these two issues were never separately addressed, causing most parishioners to be unaware that there was any difference between St. Adalbert's Parish and the St. Adalbert's Church building itself, and that the survival of each entity was dependent on different factors.

It was also the case without question that Archbishop Cupich was aware that donations were made totaling in the six figures to a fund administered by St. Adalbert Parish known as the "Tower Fund." These donations also were donated with the specific purpose of making repairs to St. Adalbert's Church. Even if he were unaware of both of the above mentioned sources of funding at the time of their becoming available, On April 9, a letter was transmitted to Archbishop Cupich personally via registered mail, announcing the formation of the St. Adalbert Church Preservation Society of Chicago IL, a non-profit entity tasked with the collection of the funds required to make the necessary repairs to St. Adalbert's Church, in order that it can be maintained as a Catholic sacred space, available for at the very least the occasional celebration of mass, and for frequent private prayer, recitation of the rosary, and other devotional activities, as recent juris prudence from the Vatican illustrates parishioners have the right to hold in an "open" Catholic church that is no longer a parish church (see enclosed documentation.) A carefully written plan explaining how such a project as that mentioned above would be undertaken was included in that mailing to Archbishop Cupich, and we invited him to meet with those of us moving forward with this project, in order that we could work collaboratively on its implementation. No communication from Archbishop Cupich or any official of the Archdiocese of Chicago in response to this mailing of any type was ever

received. Given that we personally informed the archbishop of our efforts in writing, including that the St. Adalbert Church Preservation Society has now been assured by the donor that it is receiving the seven figure donation originally offered for the maintenance of St. Adalbert's parish to the parish itself, it is impossible for him to state that no funds exist to repair or maintain St. Adalbert's Church building. We also note that in spite of receiving all of this information, Archbishop Cupich did not even address this issue in his denial of our appeal. We do not believe that Archbishop Cupich considered alternative sources of funding to those at the disposal of St. Paul's Parish that could be used to maintain St. Adalbert's Church as a Roman Catholic church building, as if he had done so, it is impossible that he could have found them lacking or inadequate. Additionally, those of us bringing to your dicastery this petition for canonical recourse are aware that in the weeks following our initial appeal to Archbishop Cupich against his decrees, the St. Adalbert Church Preservation Society has entered into discussions with Polish American fraternal organizations including the Polish National Alliance (an organization whose national headquarters is based in Chicago.) The President of the Polish National Alliance and other Polish community leaders have pledged to assist the St. Adalbert Church Preservation Society with raising the remaining funds needed to make repairs to St. Adalbert's Church and those that would be needed in the future to insure the church can remain a Roman Catholic sacred space, available for private prayer, devotional activities, and the celebration of at the very least occasional mass.

Since the formation of the St. Adalbert Church Preservation Society, the group has become a non-profit corporation in the state of Illinois, and has filed an application with the Internal Revenue Service (the United States Government's taxation agency,) to gain 501C3 tax-deductible status (meaning that all donors who would make contributions to the group could deduct these from the portion of their income that is subject to taxation.) Those of us involved in the creation and administration of the preservation society intend to follow in the footsteps of the over seventy similar groups that are presently caring for historic Roman Catholic churches at their own expense in the United States and Canada, in order that St. Adalbert's Catholic Church can continue to exist as a beacon of the faith in Pilsen, at no expense to the Archdiocese of Chicago or St. Paul's Parish in which it is located (see a copy of the same letter we originally sent Archbishop Cupich, enclosed with this appeal, that explains our intentions.) We would make note of the fact that none of the over 70 groups we cite had to appeal to the Congregation for the Clergy to force an agreement to be reached between themselves and the diocesan and archdiocesan ordinaries with whom they formed agreements to care for Roman Catholic churches at their own expense, in order that they could be retained as sacred spaces and avoid relegation to profane but not sordid use. Bishops and archbishops willingly have entered into these agreements over the course of the last fifty years, including in one case this year, as an alternative to the complete closure and demolition of these churches. We are grateful that the St. Adalbert Church Preservation Society now has well more than \$1 million on hand to make repairs to St. Adalbert's Church, though this unfortunately seems to be in spite of, rather than because of any actions taken on the part of the Chicago Archdiocese or the administrator of St. Adalbert's Parish, Fr. Michael Enright.

In the months between the initial proposal to close St. Adalbert's Parish and Church and the actual issuance of the decrees aimed at closing both St. Adalbert's Parish and Church, Fr. Enright did all in his power to discourage fundraising. Numerous statements were made that the money in the tower fund needed to be given back to its donors (Fr. Enright has since returned most of these contributions to the donors over our objections, informing the donors that the church was not able to be saved, making these funds no longer available, as the

enclosed letter illustrates,) and that further fundraising should cease. On one Sunday morning, Fr. Enright approached Richard Olszewski, and indicated that he could be charged with fraud were he not to immediately cease efforts to collect funds to repair St. Adalbert's Church (Richard is prepared to sign an affidavit, a legally binding document, stating that this transpired.) On the day prior to the decree's closing St. Adalbert's Parish and relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use were distributed, Fr. Enright also approached another parishioner, Omar Ibera, discouraging him from signing this appeal, and informing him that if he did so, St. Adalbert's Church building would likely be demolished. Following our appeal to Archbishop Cupich, Fr. Enright proceeded to convene the St. Adalbert Parish Finance Council, and draft a letter to the archbishop objecting to our filing of an appeal (it was sent interestingly enough after Archbishop Cupich denied our appeal.) This letter was replete with factual inaccuracies (as detailed in this appeal to your congregation,) and does not reflect the views of the parish at large; Fr. Enright handpicked the members of the finance council. Additionally, as reflected in the minutes of the parish finance council, Fr. Enright explicitly stated in the months prior to the issuance of the decree that those seeking to form a committee to save St. Adalbert's Parish and Church could not also sit on the finance council, in contradiction to the statements he made in his letter. Fr. Enright also dismissed Mr. Olszewski from the finance council following the transmission of his letter to Archbishop Cupich in June of 2016, further illustrating that he never meaningfully gave those seeking to save the church input into discussions regarding its future. The collective actions and statements of Fr. Enright and others within the archdiocese over the course of the last few months demonstrate a complete unwillingness to consider any funding arrangement under which St. Adalbert's Catholic Church could be maintained as a Catholic sacred space, available for occasional mass and other devotions, at no expense to St. Paul Parish or the Archdiocese of Chicago, following any closure of St. Adalbert Parish. The complete and absolute lack of willingness to discuss this possibility gives the impression that it was the desire of some that our right to maintain St. Adalbert Church as a sacred space at our own expense, in accordance with canon law, would be intentionally violated by any means necessary. To conflate the closure of the parish with the closure of the church building itself for months in communications to parishioners, to discourage fundraising, and then not acknowledge those funds which have been raised in a decree aimed at relegating St. Adalbert's Church building to profane but not sordid use is patently unjust, and most certainly constitutes sufficient cause for the immediate suspension and revocation of the decree relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use by your congregation.

If there was no desire to maintain St. Adalbert's Church as a Catholic sacred space on the part of Fr. Enright and others in the archdiocese, regardless of the fact that doing so would be an expense born in no way by the Archdiocese of Chicago and St. Paul's Parish, efforts certainly existed to convert the church to ready cash. Discussions within the St. Adalbert Parish Finance Council prior to the issuance of the decree relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use indicate that the Archdiocese of Chicago was already accepting proposals for the sale of the property, and had deemed two such proposals to be serious and worth further consideration (see the enclosed finance council minutes which document the afore mentioned claims.) We are aware that no active marketing of an open Catholic church is permitted under canon law; your dicastery made that point clear to the Archdiocese of Boston in the U.S. state of Massachusetts in 2011 when they attempted to list Holy Trinity Church in the city of Boston for sale prior to validly relegating it to profane but not sordid use. The question also must be asked as to why such efforts to liquidate St. Adalbert's Church were being undertaken at the same time such vociferous opposition to the church's continued

status as a Catholic sacred space were being expended on the part of archdiocesan and parish administration?

A clue as to the reason for this seems to be contained within the decree relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use. In this decree, note is made of the fact that St. Adalbert's parish will be merged into St. Paul's Parish, and that St. Paul Parish presently has a debt to the archdiocese in excess of \$10 million. The only way the Archdiocese of Chicago will be able to recoup this debt is if St. Paul Parish might in some way come into money that might be used to pay it down. Given that the finance Council of St. Adalbert Parish has been informed that the offer which the Archdiocese of Chicago would like to consider for the St. Adalbert Parish property totals \$2 million, and that other sources inform us that this offer has been increased to around \$2.4 million, it is plainly seen that the liquidation of the St. Adalbert parish complex, including the church building could if proceeds of its sale were applied to the debts of St. Paul Parish, create cash that would be funneled directly into the bank accounts of the central administration of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

We pointed out to Archbishop Cupich that churches were not constructed in order that they might at some future time be cashed in as an American "savings bond" might be for the financial benefit of the holder of their real property title. The archbishop did not respond in any way to this or any other point we made in our appeal to him, denying the appeal without comment of any type. If a church building is nothing more than a source of future revenue, the entire meaning of the term "sacred space," as contained in the explanation of a church's purpose set out in Canon 1214 of the Code of Canon Law of 1983, that being a sacred space set apart for the celebration of the sacraments, is completely voided. No provision exists in canon law that allows churches to be converted into cash when such might be convenient for a diocesan ordinary; Canon 1222 contains no provision in either sections 1 or 2 that would support the taking of such action, and the statement that a church building should retain its sacred character if at all possible (contained in the instructions of your dicastery issued on April 30, 2013,) would likewise militate against any argument that church buildings equal nothing more than cash reserves. We fully agree with Archbishop Cupich's belief that St. Paul Parish and the Archdiocese of Chicago must pay their bills. We believe however that doing so through the forced liquidation of St. Adalbert's Church, in spite of substantial funds being available for its repair and future maintenance, and the ability to raise more being present, is not in keeping with canon law, recent Vatican juris prudence, or simple morality. It would be quite possible for all of the other parish property belonging to St. Adalbert's Parish (we mean everything but the church building itself,) to be liquidated or put to other economically beneficial uses, with the proceeds of such directed either toward St. Paul's Parish or the Archdiocese of Chicago, while retaining St. Adalbert's Church as a Catholic Church building, the care and maintenance of which would be paid for with funds other than those of the archdiocese and St. Paul's Parish. If this meant the church would remain a sacred space, at no further expense to the archdiocese or St. Paul's Parish, those signing this appeal could accept that, and we made this clear to Archbishop Cupich in our appeal to him. He did not acknowledge this point. It would also be possible to transfer the title of the church building itself to the preservation society, without relegating the church, with the understanding that the building would only be used for Catholic liturgical purposes. Such has been done in several other parts of the United States, i.e. transferring title to a historic Catholic church for various fees to the societies which now care for them as exclusively Catholic church buildings. Such an arrangement could see St. Adalbert's church designated as a chapel, oratory or shrine, as has been done by bishops and archbishops in other similar cases across the United States, in order that its sacred character might be retained, along with at the very least the celebration

of occasional masses and frequent private prayer and religious devotional activity. To argue that in this case there is no alternative other than the relegation to profane but not sordid use of St. Adalbert's Church is simply not accurate.

We also question how it is that Archbishop Cupich intends for masses to continue beyond July 1 at St. Adalbert's Church, as stated in Bishop Rojas's letter to the parish's congregation distributed with the two decrees being appealed here on May 29 and as confirmed in recent weeks by production of mass schedules clearly showing that mass will continue to be celebrated regularly at St. Adalbert's Church after July 1 (see enclosed documents,) as the entire purpose of relegating a church building to profane but not sordid use is to end the celebration of mass and other sacraments within it. We are grateful for the continued celebration of mass in St. Adalbert's Church following July 1, though we fail to see how this is canonically valid following the reduction of the church to profane but not sordid use effective that date, and the fact that Archbishop Cupich explicitly stated he would not suspend this decree. We would very much like to regularize this canonical situation in order that mass can continue to be celebrated within St. Adalbert's church in perpetuity, even if only on a limited basis, and those of us filing this appeal state again that we are prepared to pay all of the costs associated with making this possible. That being said, it is without question the case that the archbishop seems to not understand the fact that by relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use effective July 1, 2016, and refusing explicitly in his denial of our appeal to suspend or revoke his decree of relegation to profane but not sordid use, that he has deconsecrated the church, making it a place that mass would not be celebrated following the taking of such actions. Based on all of the information contained in this appeal, especially the fact that it does not seem to be the case that Archbishop Cupich grasps the meaning of relegating a church to profane but not sordid use, (i.e. what is meant by the taking of this action and what causes must be present to justify its taking,) we ask this congregation to please suspend and revoke the decree that was issued relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use. If this is done, we are fully prepared to enter into a dialogue with Archbishop Cupich and officials of the Archdiocese of Chicago to make arrangements for all costs associated with the repair and future retention of St. Adalbert's Church as a Roman Catholic sacred space to be taken on by the St. Adalbert's Church Preservation Society, allowing limited masses to continue at St. Adalbert's Church, along with private prayer and other devotional activities.

The decree's description of St. Adalbert's Church as a "dangerous structure" is also inaccurate. It has been demonstrated that the structural stability of the towers themselves has not been compromised. The only issue which exists with regard to the towers of St. Adalbert's Church is the loosening of some of the face brick which comprises the exterior covering of the towers. Prior to the issuance of the decrees, those of us filing this appeal began to make inquiries as to what the actual cost of addressing the issues which affect the church's towers would be. Following an inspection of the towers by a contractor skilled in making masonry repairs, it was determined that all needed repairs could be made to the church's towers for \$2.3 million (see a proposed agreement drafted by this contractor which illustrates this point.) This estimate was well below that proposed by the archdiocese of Chicago. Given the amount of money the St. Adalbert's Church Preservation Society presently has on hand, it would be possible to initiate repairs to the church's towers very rapidly if the Archdiocese of Chicago would sign off on this project.

Conclusion

Cardinal Stella, St. Adalbert Parish and Church mean a great deal to those who worship and practice their Catholic faith within them. Built as a testament to the faith of the early Polish settlers of Pilsen, and now enjoyed as a place of spiritual comfort by their descendants and a large community of immigrants from Mexico who pray within the church's walls along with their descendants, this parish and church have become an integral part of the fabric of the Pilsen neighborhood. Archbishop Cupich has acknowledged that the conditions which justify the closure of a parish are different from those which justify the closure of a church, through his issuance of two separate decrees. Given the lack of correct terminology regarding the type of extinctive union which is being ordered to take place between St. Adalbert and St. Paul parishes, the fact that no provision is made within the decree for the Polish speaking parishioners of St. Adalbert's Parish following the merger, and the fact that at no time did the Archdiocese of Chicago step forward to call a halt to the financial practices undertaken by Fr. Michelini, we believe it is improper for St. Adalbert's Parish to now be extinguished. Even if St. Adalbert's Parish is eliminated however, we do not believe causes of sufficient gravity exist to justify the relegation to profane but not sordid use of St. Adalbert's Church, and above all else would ask your eminence and this dicastery to rescind this decree. We believe we have demonstrated through our statements in this appeal and enclosed documentation that the contention in the decree relegating St. Adalbert Church to profane but not sordid use, that no funds exist with which to repair and care for the St. Adalbert's Church building is incorrect. More than \$1.2 million is presently on hand to make repairs, more money is presently being raised, and additional funds can be expected to be collected in future years that would be used to insure the church's preservation as a sacred space. In no way would St. Adalbert Church's continued status as a sacred space burden the Archdiocese of Chicago or St. Paul's Parish, were care for the church to be assumed by the St. Adalbert's Church Preservation Society, a group established for this purpose. Even if you can argue that St. Adalbert's Church building is not needed by St. Paul's Parish, this in and of itself is not a cause of sufficient gravity justifying the relegation of the church to profane but not sordid use if funds to care for its continued existence as a sacred space are present. We have illustrated that a contractor proficient in masonry repair has stated that the restoration of the church's towers could be undertaken for less than the cost estimated for these repairs by the Archdiocese of Chicago. While we do not appreciate the efforts which have been made to impede our efforts to collect funds to repair and preserve St. Adalbert's Church as a solely Catholic sacred space, it is the desire of all of the signers of this appeal to bury the hatchet, and work with the Archdiocese of Chicago to implement a plan that satisfies the concerns of all involved in this situation. Our plan to preserve St. Adalbert's Church in no way precludes St. Paul Parish from liquidating the rest of the St. Adalbert Parish campus. We would also be open to working with St. Paul Parish, the archdiocese or any other party to assist in developing plans for the repurposing of the other parish buildings, i.e. all those other than the church (with the church remaining a solely sacred space.) There are a multitude of arrangements under which St. Adalbert's Church could remain a Catholic sacred space without imposing on St. Paul's Parish, and even positively contributing to it. We thus ask your eminence and your dicastery to please suspend and revoke the decrees Archbishop Cupich issued to eliminate St. Adalbert's Parish and Church building, or at the very least the one relegating St. Adalbert's Church to profane but not sordid use. We would love nothing more than to be able to sit down with Archbishop Cupich or his representatives so that we can work out an agreement that allows St. Adalbert's Church to remain a Catholic sacred space, available for at least private prayer, devotional activities, and occasional masses, at no expense to the archdiocese or St. Paul Parish, the entity into which it is proposed St. Adalbert Parish be merged. We look forward to your response to this appeal, and assure you your eminence that we keep you in our prayers.

Sincerely