

Friends of Holy Saviour Parish
P.O. Box 954
Linwood, PA 19061

June 10, 2013

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Philadelphia
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Your Excellency:

We write as baptized lay members of Christ's faithful and as parishioners in good standing of Holy Saviour Parish, Linwood, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

On the weekend of June 1 and June 2, 2013, we received verbal notice from our pastor, Rev. John J. Sibel, and a letter distributed to us in our church, dated June 1/2, 2013, and signed by Father Sibel, that it is your intention to merge our parish, along with Immaculate Conception Parish, in Marcus Hook, with St. John Fisher Parish, Boothwyn, to form a new parish effective July 1, 2013. It is our understanding that everyone will attend Mass at the current Saint John Fisher church. For the time being, the Holy Saviour and Immaculate Conception church buildings will still be maintained as worship sites for weddings, funerals, and feast days, and Sunday Mass may also be celebrated at these worship sites at the discretion of the pastor of the newly formed parish and his newly formed pastoral council.

For the reasons stated below, in accordance with the provisions of canon 1734, we respectfully urge you to revoke or amend any decrees that would alter the existing canonical status of Holy Saviour Parish, by suspending the execution of any such decrees. As per the guidelines listed in Appendix A of the document entitled "Building a New Parish Community, Archdiocese of Philadelphia", we are submitting this appeal to you within the peremptory time-limit of ten business days from the time we were lawfully notified of this action.

In the event that your letter/communication of June 1 and 2, 2013, was not the lawful notification of any decree, but merely an indication of your intent to issue such a decree in the future, we respectfully request that we be formally and lawfully notified of any such decree in a timely fashion so that we may exercise our right of appeal as parishioners in good standing.

Please be assured that Holy Saviour Parish is currently a spiritually and socially vibrant community. We have a 99- year history of faith, volunteerism, tolerance, service, and tradition. We are rich in many ways, most importantly in our compassion and our concern for those in need. We maintain our facilities prudently and efficiently, and we are responsible stewards of the resources available to us. We have made great financial strides recently, and we believe that we can complete our journey to becoming self-sustaining in a very short period of time.

We possess the population, the facilities, the location, and the will to continue God's work in this part of the Archdiocese. We truly and firmly believe that eliminating both Holy Saviour Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish from an area of great need, and locating the parish seat such a great distance from these areas will cause grave harm to souls.

With regard to the shortage of clergy as referenced in your pamphlet entitled "Building a Strong Local Catholic Church, we have looked carefully at this and have several ideas that are worthy of your consideration, all fully in accord with Catholic doctrine:

- Our laity is willing to play an increased role in the day-to-day affairs of the parish, spiritually through lay-led services, and financially through greater involvement;
- On the formula of many other American dioceses, we are willing to consider "twinning" formulas or Linked Parishes, where one pastor could minister to us and to adjoining parishes;
- We are willing to reach out and seek other qualified Catholic clergy, including deacons and those from religious orders and from overseas countries which are now a major source of seminarians and clerics across Catholic America.

In brief, Your Excellency, we are seeking any and all solutions aimed at maintaining the existence of Holy Saviour Parish, Linwood, as a fully-functioning parish. We respectfully request that you rescind your decision to merge Holy Saviour Parish with Immaculate Conception Parish and St. John Fisher Parish as stated in the letter distributed to us on June 1 and 2, 2013, and that you provide us with the opportunity to enter into mediation with you to address the following concerns that we have:

1. that the salvation of souls of our parish will be put in grave harm;
2. that all viable options were considered in this process;
3. that the cumulative processes leading to this decision were fully implemented.

Through our resolve to implement a creative plan to address our pastoral and financial needs, we believe we can alleviate your concerns with regard to the faithful in this region. We are convinced that our people will do anything they can to make this happen.

Respectfully Submitted,

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cc:

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