



April 13, 2015

Your Excellency,

As a devout Catholic and Parishioner of St. Laurentius, I am humbly asking you to rescind the announcement you made on March 22, 2015 stating that the Archdiocese has granted Holy Name permission to move forward with the demolition of my church building at 1608 E. Berks Street. This church has stood for generations, and has been a sacred and holy cornerstone for my family and my neighbors' families. We are heartbroken that a better solution cannot be found.

The parishioners of St. Laurentius hired an engineering firm who has provided options for securing the building and as a parishioner I am humbly asking that their proposal be considered. If we are allowed the chance to proceed as recommended we can secure the structure and eliminate any threats of structural failure. We've raised hundreds of thousands of dollars through pledges and continue to work to raise funds for the repairs. We are confident that our church will be eligible for preservation grants and we are working to garner support from wealthy private benefactors. We humbly ask you to take into consideration the guidelines set forth by the Congregation of Clergy in 2013 which states that "in law and tradition" there is a "clear disposition" that a sacred edifice should retain its "sacred character, if at all possible" and that only a "grave reason" can justify the relegation of a church building to "profane but not sordid use" [i] Without such just cause, a church building should never be relegated to "profane but not sordid use." We understand that your just cause is related to structural concerns and financial constraints, however, you have not taken into consideration the funds that we have raised nor the fact that this church has not been deemed to be beyond repair. It is your duty as Archbishop to show to the entire Archdiocese that sufficient funds have not been raised to save this church and I am stating here in plain speech that they have indeed been raised. The Congregation of Clergy gives parishioners and private donors the right to raise funds to finance the repair of sacred church buildings, and we have done exactly that. We have a plan to move forward immediately to secure the structure thereby mitigating any additional damage to this sacred structure so that over time, the church can be fully restored, maintained and preserved.

Please give us the opportunity to save St. Laurentius' sacred church, a most beloved, historic and sacred place.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,

St. Laurentius Parishioner

Printed name: _____

CC: Office of the Nuncio, Washington D.C.
Philadelphia's City Council President, Darrell Clarke

Citation:

[i] Puma, Mike Diocese of Buffalo Plans to Demolish St. Ann's Church Later This Year Citing Expensive Structural Concerns, Buffalo Rising, Aug 19, 2013 <http://buffalorising.com/2013/08/diocese-of-buffalo-plans-to-demolish-st-anns-church-later-this-year-citing-expensive-structural-concerns/>