



For Immediate Release:

March 8, 2012

Contact:

Christine Schenk CSJ
216-228-0869, ext. 4 (work)
216-513-3647 (cell)
chris@futurechurch.org

FutureChurch Statement on Vatican Decision to Overrule Suppression of 13 Cleveland Parishes

FutureChurch congratulates those courageous Cleveland Catholics whose love for their parish communities led them to appeal successfully to the Vatican who reversed decisions of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland to suppress their parishes and close their churches.

We call on the Cleveland Diocese to meet as soon as possible with parishioners from the 13 appealing parishes and develop a plan for restoring them to their parish homes.

This is a landmark decision. For the first time the Vatican has powerfully upheld the rights of Catholics to have an appropriate voice in determining the future of their parish by overruling a diocesan bishop's decision to suppress 13 parishes.

FutureChurch offered guidance and contact with canon lawyers to Catholics from 20 parishes in Cleveland who downloaded a special "Canonical Appeals for Dummies" resource and other prayer, educational, and organizing materials from our website. We are proud to have supported Cleveland Catholics discerning an appropriate response to Bishop Richard Lennon's decision to close their vibrant parishes, in many cases against recommendations from his own staff and the Diocesan Priests' Council.

For the past four years FutureChurch's **Save Our Parish Community** initiative has been educating Catholics all over the US and worldwide about their right to appeal, as scores of dioceses closed hundreds of parishes, many because of the priest shortage. We have worked closely with Peter Borré and Boston's Council of Parishes to whom much credit for this landmark ruling belongs.

Last February our **Save Our Parish Community** initiative experienced its first resounding success when the Vatican supported parishioner appeals from thirteen parish churches from three dioceses [Allentown, PA (9) Springfield MA (3), and Buffalo (1)] and ruled that though the bishops decision to suppress the parish was upheld, the churches could not be sold or closed. FutureChurch supplied canonical and other resources to parishioners in all three of these dioceses.

About FutureChurch *Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, FutureChurch is a national coalition of 3,500 parish centered Catholics striving to educate fellow Catholics about the seriousness of the priest shortage, the centrality of the Eucharist (the Mass), and the systemic inequality of women in the Catholic Church. FutureChurch makes presentations throughout the country, distributes education, advocacy and prayer resources and recruits activists who work for changes that will provide all Roman Catholics the opportunity to participate fully in Church life and leadership.*

FutureChurch

17307 Madison Avenue - Lakewood, Ohio 44107
216-228-0869 - info@futurechurch.org - www.futurechurch.org