

A message to clergy, plaintiffs, parishioners and friends of the former St. Paul Church and those whose faith has been shaken by these events:

This document recounts the basic facts prior to the needless destruction of St. Paul Church and leading to a church family deeply wounded and to the alienation of approximately three hundred or more parishioners. Questions will be answered and confirmatory documents provided on request. I personally witnessed all of the following events save three and I am open to any corrections.

On August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina blew away the lower six or seven feet of the walls and the floor covering of St. Paul Church. Holy Mass was celebrated in St. Paul's on October 17, 2005. Following temporary closing in of the walls, routine scheduled masses were celebrated on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays until June 2006 when stopped due to summer heat but never resumed. Bishop William Houck, then President of the Catholic Extension Society, celebrated Mass on the second Sunday after Easter, April 23, 2006. There was one funeral and one or two baptisms in this church, which two years later, was described as destroyed by Katrina.

At a Parish Pastoral Council meeting on September 10, 2006 plans were presented for repair, enlargement, and alterations of the church, and erection of two ten thousand square foot buildings. The estimated cost was nine to ten million dollars which was far beyond the available funds. The Council voted to repair the damage and build a smaller parish hall. Our Pastor did not seem to be pleased and did not mention rebuilding St. Paul again. He maintained that no decisions about rebuilding had been made; however, a letter of November 10, 2006 to the Diocesan Financial Officer indicated that a decision to build at the Our Lady of Lourdes site had indeed been made.

On March 4th, 2007 the decision to build a new larger church at the OLL site, to convert St. Paul's into a Community Center, and to raze Our Lady of Lourdes was announced.

Three "Dialogue and Pastoral Visioning Sessions" were to be held in March. The March 4, 2007 parish bulletin said: Holy Family Parish "*will be gathering for three parish **dialogue** and pastoral visioning sessions*". "*an opportunity to **discuss** their vision for the future*" etc. The March 11, 2007 parish bulletin said: "Pastoral Visioning Sessions"...HFP "*will continue to gather for our **mutual expression** and response to the future pastoral vision of our parish*".

The words "**dialogue**" "**discuss**" and "**mutual expression**" state and definitely mean a discussion and mutual expression which would include questions and answers. The actual "sessions" were totally different. The Moderator, Rev. Antone Lynch announced the ground rules... that the decision (to not rebuild St. Paul Church) would not be reconsidered...and there would be no questions; each speaker would have 45 seconds and the entire meeting would be over in one hour. At the second "session" a different moderator said the subject would be anger management and post traumatic stress disorder and that if anyone thought otherwise, they could leave now. Many did leave but some came back and spoke. The moderators obviously did not follow the messages in the bulletins, thus the meetings were misrepresented and flawed from the beginning. Many people made statements and asked questions but not one person received a reply from the Moderator or Pastor. Most parishioners resented such a display of indifference and being totally ignored. At the third session Rev. Carver was not present and Rev. Lynch

presided, saying that we would be saying “goodbye” to our church and we could offer a prayer. One person started a prayer but was interrupted and called a blasphemer. These three “sessions” were insulting and arrogant producing even more ill-will.

Communication with Pastor and Bishop were requested but were either denied or ignored. Unbeknown to others, three prominent people met with the Bishop and Pastor; a generous offer of financial help was made but the meeting produced nothing; the offer was rebuffed. Unable to discuss these drastic plans, detrimental to parishioners and to the City of Pass Christian, a group of laity organized a campaign to put the matter before the public hoping that the church leaders would recognize the folly of destroying St. Paul Church. This church and its predecessors had faithfully served the people for 165 years and the parishioners and the city saw and felt the need for it to be repaired.

The City in 2005 requested that St. Paul church be restored to service. In 2007 four hundred and forty parishioners and eight hundred other citizens signed petitions of support for rebuilding. The press and TV voiced strong support through editorials, all in vain for there was no response from the church leaders.

Having failed in attempting to communicate and having no voice in our Parish Family, a civil lawsuit was filed in May, 2007. This case has been to the Mississippi Supreme Court and returned back to the Harrison County Chancery Court where it awaits further action. A canonical appeal was made to the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome which denied it and stated; “Whereas, the petition made to the Ordinary and to the Congregation for the Clergy was made without regard to either the procedure for administrative recourse or the canonical time limits set forth in canons 1732-1739”. Canon 1734 states in part, “The Petition must be made within the peremptory period of ten useful days...” A clarification from Monsignor Giovanni Carru, Undersecretary of the Congregation, on 12 May, 2009 said. “The original recourse brought by the parishioners of St. Paul was **“rejected on procedural grounds”**. This is significant because a letter published in the February 22, 2008 Gulf Pine Catholic from Bishop Rodi states “The matter was extensively presented to Cardinal Hummes...” Bishop Rodi’s statement is not confirmed in any letter from the Congregation for the Clergy which said, through Msgr. Carru, **“rejected on procedural grounds”**. *Vide supra*

Shortly after the filing of the lawsuit, Father Carver began a campaign against the plaintiffs, apparently in accordance with Bishop Rodi’s letter of Feb. 22, 2008 citing Matthew 18:15-18, but conveniently overlooking verses 15 and 16. All lay ministers (Eucharistic, ushers, lectors and a school board member) who happened to be plaintiffs, were stealthily removed from their respective ministries without notification to them. One long time lector on his way to the Ambo to read at morning mass was stopped and told he could no longer be a reader. The Deacon was sent to retrieve the Holy Eucharist during Mass from a lady who took the host in a pyx to her bedfast husband as she had done daily for many months.

Homilies in Our Lady of Lourdes are sometimes directed to the plaintiffs in the law suit in innovative ways and odd interpretation of the Scripture. At other times the vitriol has been plainly and openly directed to the plaintiffs. I cite a few examples and leave to your discretion to consider the motivation...

On June 4, 2007, the parable of the wicked farmers (Lk 20:9-16; Mt 21:33-41; Mk 12:1-12). (not verbatim) This lawsuit is built from greed and pride. They want the land, they want the building. They want it all and will stop at nothing to get it.

On February 5th, 2008, Mardi Gras Day, the homily was about the yard signs saying **Save St. Paul's** which had been in people's yards for nearly a year and some found their way into the parade. Fr. Carver said that these signs are signs of great, great deep seated hatred. They are in opposition to the Bishop, a priest who had done no moral wrong and in opposition against the highest group in our Catholic Church in the Vatican, apparently referring to our canonical appeal which was denied **on procedural grounds** *vide supra*.

On Sept. 27, 2009 Fr. Carver, not in the homily, but near the end of mass spoke of the school mass in the gymnasium which should be in a church; then said, what you do in the presence of these children will instill in them the idea that you can do what you want and if you don't get it you sue. Showing emotion, he said that because of a whole lot of lawyers we are back in civil court. We will have to continue to pay and pay all these lawyers, motioning toward an attorney attending Mass.

On October 9th, 2010 near the end of mass, before the dismissal, Fr. Carver spoke regarding the lawsuit and four years of horrible discord and the more violent it gets among other statements and telling that it is a very sad place for him, not a place of joy. At least four times he requested that I shoot him, "just to get it over with and get your way". On request, I will send or email to any reader a full transcript of this very strange event which is certainly not proper in a church before the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Carver refuses to speak with me out side the church about the church or lawsuit or anything that displeases him, yet he abuses the Blessed Sacrament and church to speak of his apparent delusions (violence, shooting etc.) and his discomforts (very sad place for him).

Reports from three Engineers **do not** advise demolition of the church; a fourth report has been partially quoted but not disclosed in its entirety.

The demolition of St. Paul Church will long be remembered by those who love that church; a wound that may require generations to heal. And what good has been achieved by this act? Why it was destroyed remains an unanswered and serious question. Who can answer? Who and why would anyone want to destroy the Parish Church building and congregation after 165 years of God's blessings and success as a parish?

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