

Mrs. Jennifer T. Lockemeyer  
147 Chestnut Hill Drive  
Rochester, New York 14617

June 4, 2010

VIA HAND DELIVERY & U.S. MAIL

Most Rev. Matthew H. Clark  
Bishop of Rochester  
1150 Buffalo Rd.  
Rochester, NY 14624

Your Excellency,

Baptized lay members of Christ's faithful who are parishioners in good standing of the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle (alternatively, "STA") have mandated me to act as their Procurator. Enclosed are copies of 410 mandates. I write on their behalf, and also in my own right as parishioner of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

In a decree dated May 26, 2010, you order the dissolution of St. Thomas the Apostle and four other parishes in the Town of Irondequoit, with an effective date of July 1, 2010. The decree was promulgated to us by announcement at the Masses on May 29 and 30, 2010. Addended to your decree is a letter to all parishioners, that you accept the Proposal and Recommendation as set forth under the Irondequoit Pastoral Planning Group ("IPPG") without reservation. By your acceptance of the IPPG Recommendation, you agree to the closing of St. Thomas the Apostle Church and a ceasing of all activity so that the land and buildings may be sold. For reasons stated below, in accordance with the provisions of Canon 1734, we respectfully urge you to revoke your decree.

Incorporated by reference are the prior submissions: The STA Proposal, submitted November 1, 2009, The IPPG Finance/Facilities Committee: Chair's Report, dated January 20, 2010, The STA Addendum to the IPPG Recommendation, submitted February 11, 2010, and my letter to you of March 11, 2010.

Under Canon 374, we have a right to our juridic existence. The juridic person exists in perpetuity unless it is legitimately suppressed or stops all activity for 100 years. The IPPG Recommendation, which you accept without reservation to substantiate the closing of STA, fails to meet this standard. Our parish meets all of the criteria for spiritual and financial vibrancy.

**First**, your decree closes an active healthy parish, in favor of less viable, less financially efficient parishes open.

- Over 400 mandates have been signed in support of STA.
- Saint Margaret Mary Church, one of the three churches chosen to remain as a worship site as part of the IPPG recommendation, has maintained double-digit decreases attendance each year since 1999. See Chart, Exhibit I.
- STA has zero immediate capital needs.
- STA has zero fixed debt.
- STA has the highest outside income source of all Irondequoit parishes.
- STA has received an initial distribution of \$180,000 from the E. A. Jennings Trust, and anticipate a substantial final distribution in the next 12–24 months.
- STA has the Msgr. Burns Education Fund and Fiesta Fund worth approximately \$250,000.
- STA is the most financially efficient of the Irondequoit parishes.
- STA is the only Irondequoit parish that does not operate at a deficit.
- STA is the only Irondequoit parish with higher operating revenue than operating costs.
- Although families have withheld funds from diocesan appeals out of protest, when parish financial needs are presented, Parishioners' contributions exceed the needs.
- As listed in the STA Proposal, STA's spiritual environment has fostered extensive parish based groups and ministries.

**Second**, the effect of your decree would close the site best suited to handle the shortage of Priests and the consolidation of parishes.

- STA's infrastructure is the only parish that meets all needs (sacramental, priest accommodations, education, parking, meetings and parish functions) without additional capital investment.
- STA has 1000+ seating capacity: the largest of all churches in Irondequoit and in the Diocese of Rochester.
- On average, STA can accommodate 42½ percent more parishioners than any other Church in Irondequoit.
- The nearly 300 designated parking spaces would allow for ample parking without additional expense. The remaining sites require an immediate expense of \$700,000 to expand/renovate their parking lots. The egress points at the parking lots of the IPPG selected church sites have a higher incidence of traffic complications.

**Third**, the effect of your decree will be negligent in its approach to future growth and the management of assets.

- Construction on Lighthouse Pointe, a development project that will include approximately 500 housing units, a hotel, businesses, retail shops and restaurants within 2 miles of STA, and within the STA parish boundaries, at a projected capital investment of \$250 million has been allowed to

- proceed by virtue of the New York Court of Appeals decision rendered February 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Construction of City of Rochester, County of Monroe Marina and Harbor of Rochester Project consisting of 500 condominiums, restaurants, and office space. This waterfront project is located 4.5 miles from STA church and although it falls within the Diocesan Parish of Holy Cross Church, residents may still choose to attend STA.
  - The replacement cost of the STA campus is over \$12 million and the IPPG projected sale price of \$2.16 million would result in a wasted asset in excess of \$10 million.
  - There will be an immediate capital cost of \$1.7M to renovate the remaining three parishes to accommodate the estimated additional mass attendees (expansion of parking lots, rectories, and other capital renovations).
  - The IPPG Recommendation assumes a retention rate of 80%, equating to a 20% loss in collection revenue.
  - A loss of only 20% in attendance and collection revenue is unrealistic given the extreme ill will felt by the majority of parishioners at STA and other parishes.
  - The IPPG projected 80% retention rate after the implementation of the church closure/consolidation plan is unsupported by any metric or measure, and overstates the projected collection revenue.
  - Contrary evidence to a 80% retention rate for a major change are: (1) the results of a STA parishioner survey administered in September 2009; (2) the 33% retention rate realized a full two years after the closings experienced by the Cathedral Community; and (3) IPPG Answer, No. 25, page 9 of the "IPPG List of Comprehensive Answers to Parishioner Questions", published Summer 2009.
  - Therefore, a lower retention rate of 25% is far more likely, equating to a projected loss of collection revenue of 75%.

**Fourth**, the effect of your decree eliminates a sacred space with spiritual and social significance.

- The tomb of Monsignor Richard K. Burns, beloved STA pastor of 28 years and a Vice Rector of the North American College of Rome, is located three feet from the Baptistry.
- The adoration chapel would be closed, adoration beginning in 1992 would cease, and the Eucharist would be removed from the sacred space, from the faithful and the neighborhood.
- The Memorial Shrine to the Unborn, built and maintained by the Knight of Columbus, would have to be removed.

**Fifth**, the effect of your decree leaves no Catholic church open north of Titus Avenue, while 13 churches are left open in a comparable square mile radius south of Titus Avenue.

- STA is the most northern church in Irondequoit; its closing would abandon many Catholics. See attached Map, Exhibit III.

**Sixth**, closing all five parishes and forming one new parish disenfranchises hundreds of Irondequoit Catholics and endangers their pastoral care.

- The IPPG plan to merge parishes is based on a faulty premise that “clustering” was successful but did not go far enough. When parishes share services as part of a cluster (two or more parishes) the only results are dramatic decreases in all three vital areas for a church: attendance, sacraments received, and revenue collected.
- Exemplary in this regard is the Sacred Heart Cathedral, consisting of the former members of closed parishes of Sacred Heart Church, Holy Rosary, and Most Precious Blood. This community experienced a 67% decrease in parishioner attendance a full two years after implementation of the consolidation plan. To date, the Cathedral Community has only 450 registered families. This is exemplary in that the dramatic decrease was in spite of the following:
  - (a) The gradual implementation of the plan: shared priests, to church clusters, to consolidation, to closure over a 10-year time span.
  - (b) Equal representation by the three parishes on the planning councils was maintained throughout the time period.
  - (c) Earnest attempts to integrate parishioners of the three churches by the priests and laity.
  - (d) Holding town hall-style meetings or “listening Sundays” to allow parishioners to air frustrations, make comments, or ask questions.
  - (e) Numerous surveys to determine the needs of each parish community.
  - (f) Personal outreach by clergy and the laity to individual parish members experiencing and expressing profound loss due to the consolidation.

Therefore, even under what is purported to be ideal conditions for parish closings and consolidation, it can be easily proven that such closures are not in the best interest of the parishioners, this Diocese, the Catholic Faith, or our Holy Father.

- The retention estimate provided in the IPPG of 80% is unsupported by any current evidence or prior experience within the Diocese of Rochester. In fact, extrapolating the experience of the Sacred Heart Cathedral Community to estimate the potential loss of parishioners at St. Thomas would be deficient unless it was conceded that losses would be greater in the latter church’s situation. This is primarily because St. Thomas will be suppressed (i.e. a forced closure) and the churches associated with the Cathedral Community voluntarily chose to cease existence.
- The STA Proposal’s projection of a 25% retention rate for the consolidated church combination set forth in the IPPG Recommendation is based on the results of a survey of STA parishioners in September 2009. The IPPG has never attempted a survey of any parish community as part of its due diligence.
- Seizing the assets of a financially stable church in order to support churches that operate at a deficit is ethically wrong.

- When people see viable parishes closed and valuable assets wasted, they will leave and for many it would be from the Catholic Church altogether.
- The hurt and ill will perpetrated on the Catholic population in Irondequoit will impede and even prevent retention.

**Seventh**, it is our belief that the process used to arrive at your decision was intrinsically flawed.

- The IPPG used incomplete, old or in some cases incorrect information to support their conclusion to close STA.
- The IPPG Recommendation to close STA was conceived prior to examining all evidence, with research performed to the extent that the findings supported a closure of STA.
- Only upon receipt of the STA Proposal did the IPPG consider the financial repercussions of suppression, and directed its financial sub-committee to examine the financial aspects of various church combinations.
- The IPPG Recommendation directly contradicts the findings of the financial sub-committee report of January 2010 in favor of a model (church combination) that has a likelihood of financial erosion, and higher likelihood of expenses exceeding income.
- The IPPG failed to supply any reason for contradicting the recommendations of the January 2010 financial report written by its financial subcommittee in choosing the worship sites for the consolidated parish.
- The IPPG failed to ensure equal representation by all parishes during the most critical period of its planning. See Exhibit II.
- The IPPG failed to consider that the unequal parish representation would skew the meeting discussion, research and outcome of its process of consensus.
- The IPPG failed to appoint STA members in July 2008, and refused to appoint STA parishioners in later months to ensure equal representation by all parishes.
- The IPPG Recommendation and the Diocese of Rochester discriminate against traditional Catholics in its closure of STA. To wit: STA is the sole parish in the Diocese of Rochester where it is customary to receive the Body of Christ while kneeling at the altar rail. At the implementation of the IPPG Recommendation, there will be no churches in the Town of Irondequoit with an altar rail.
- This decision is rooted in the Diocese of Rochester's systematic discouragement of traditional Catholicism, and allows preferential treatment to parishes embracing contemporary views of Catholicism.
- We have been punished as a parish community as evidenced in October 2009: as a result of the STA Pastoral Council refused to agree to close our own parish, none of the cluster priests presided at STA masses and with no notice, confessions at STA were cancelled.

Bishop Clark, STA has no flaw that warrants the closure, sale and disbursement of our faith community and sacred objects. We have numerous ideas to ensure the continued financial security of our parish and our fellow Irondequoit churches during these difficult economic times. As outlined in our 2009 Proposal, and 2010 Addendum, we cannot be clearer that any consolidation scenario excluding STA would be disastrous to our community and to the Diocese of Rochester. Furthermore, the existence of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish will strengthen all Irondequoit Catholic Churches, and ensure the promotion of our Catholic faith.

Considering these things, we respectfully ask that you reconsider the decisions found in your decree relative to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Specifically, we ask that you revoke your decision to dissolve STA. In the alternative, we ask that you amend the IPPG recommendation and include STA as a remaining worship site. We also ask that you suspend the effects of your decree pending the outcome of our appeals.

With assurance of prayers and cordial wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Jennifer Tenebruso Lockemeyer, J.D.

cc: Archbishop Timothy Dolan, with Exhibits, STA Proposal, STA Addendum  
Philip Gray, J.C.L.  
Father Norm Tanck, C.S.B.

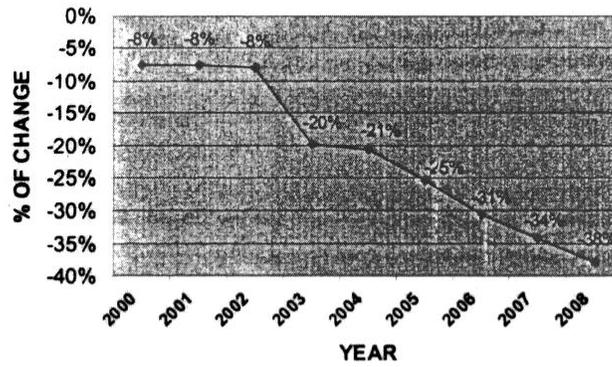
Exhibit I.



### IRONDEQUOIT MASS PERCENTAGES

#	YEARS	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
3	Christ the King	1,341	4%	6%	6%	-11%	-9%	-17%	-21%	-20%	-14%
5											
2	St Salome	549	-4%	-9%	-9%	-26%	-33%	-36%	-38%	-40%	-47%
5	St Thomas										
6	Apostle	857	0%	3%	3%	-16%	-16%	-21%	-16%	-36%	-41%
3											
1	StCecilia	1,179	-7%	-14%	-15%	-15%	-14%	-27%	-30%	-35%	-36%
4											
3	St Margaret Mary	1,643	-23%	-19%	-19%	-31%	-33%	-29%	-44%	-43%	-54%
	<b>% of CHANGE</b>	<b>5,569</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>-21%</b>	<b>-25%</b>	<b>-31%</b>	<b>-34%</b>	<b>-38%</b>

**MASS ATTENDANCE % OF CHANGE FROM 1999**



## Exhibit II, Chart of STA Representation in the IPPG

Meeting Date	Committee	Number Present	Number Absent	#STA	Note
06/09/04	Oversight Committee held at St. Margaret Mary's	13 + 5 priests	4	0	STA pastor not present
09/29/04	Oversight Committee held at St. Thomas the Apostle	13 + 6 priests	2	0	
10/27/04	Oversight Committee held at St. Salome's	10 + 4 priests	7	0	STA pastor not present
12/01/04	Oversight Committee held at St. Cecilia's	10 + 6 priests	4	0	
02/16/05	Parish Oversight Committee at SSJ Spirituality Center	Not listed	4	0	Unknown if STA pastor present
03/30/05	Irondequoit Oversight Meeting held at St. Ann's	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
11/16/05	Regional Structures and Governance – Two Models at St. Margaret Mary Church	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
01/28/06	Regional Planning Meeting – Scenario Pro/Con Summaries	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
03/25/06	IPPC Meeting	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
07/05/06	IPPG Oversight	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
08/17/06	Irondequoit Pastoral Planning Group Joint Meeting with St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Council	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
10/07/06	IPPG	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
12/13/06	IPPG	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
01/24/07	IPPC	16 + 5 priests	2	3	STA person stood in for finance head from SC
02/28/07	IPPC	12 + 4 priests	7	3	
03/28/07	IPPC	16 + 6 priests	1	3	STA person stood in for finance head from SC
05/23/07	IPPC	13 + 5 priests	5	2	STA pastor not present

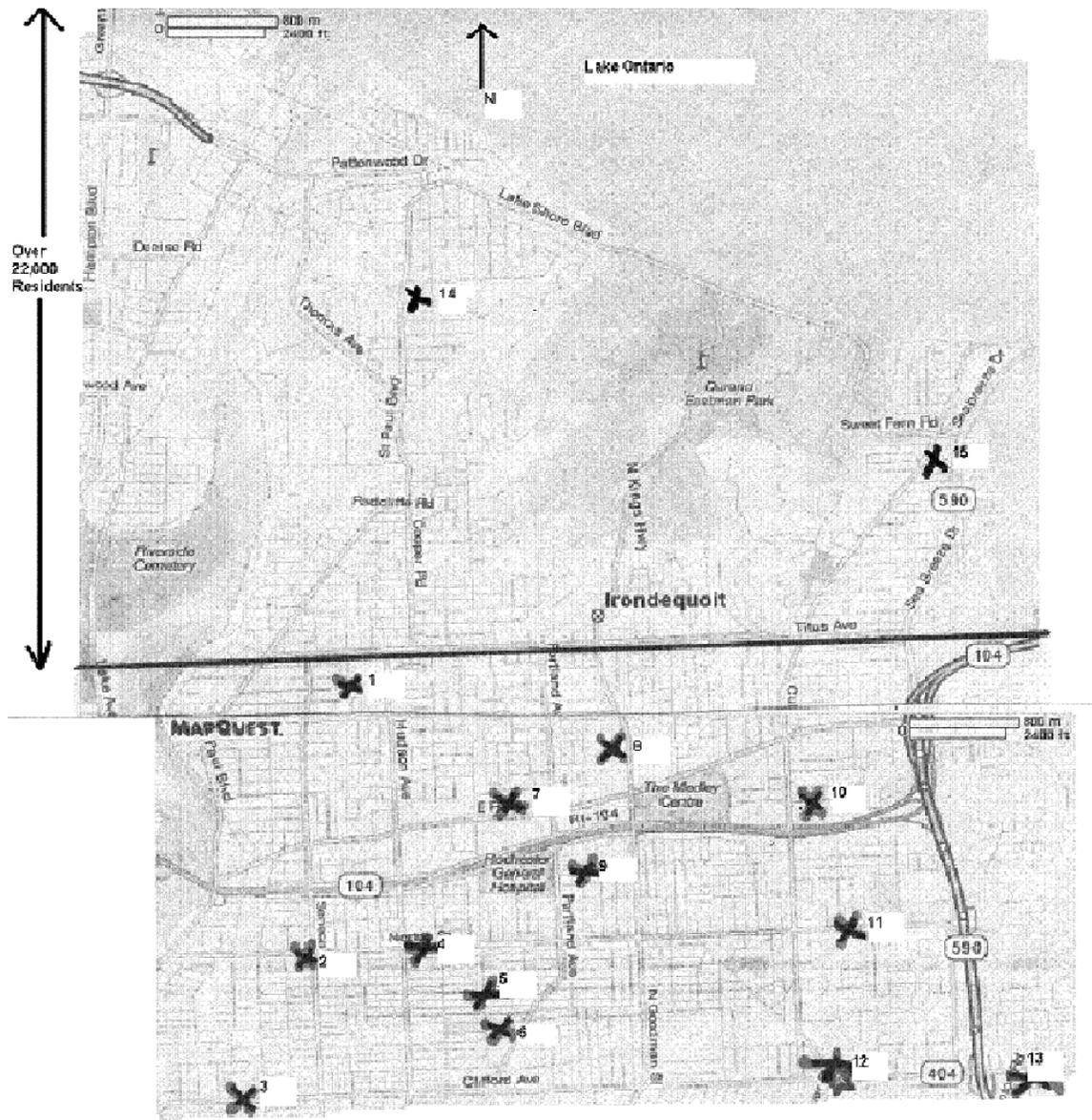
09/26/07	IPPC	11 + 5 priests	1 (from STA)	2	From this meeting forward, no dedicated STA priest; just cluster pastor
11/28/07	IPPC	21 + 5 priests	3 (including 1 from STA)	2	
01/23/08	IPPC	12 + 3 priests	7 (including 3 from STA)	1	Cluster pastor not present
03/26/08	IPPC	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	An STA person reported on finance
05/28/08	IPPC	14 + 3 priests	4 (including 1 from STA)	2	
07/09/08	IPPC	13 + 5 priests	3	2	One less STA person due to term expiration
09/24/08	IPPC	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of another STA person</li> <li>• Minutes say representation from STA still needed</li> </ul>
11/19/08	IPPC	13 + 6 priests	2 (including 1 from STA)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lever representing Ochs due to scheduling conflicts</li> <li>• Subcommittees “must be composed of members from all 5 cluster parishes” (unclear if this actually occurred); none of the 5 new subcommittees was led by an STA person</li> <li>• “We will be a 5 parish consolidated cluster, with if possible, the preservation of 5 worshiping communities.”</li> <li>• “The concern has been that a 5 parish cluster is too large to lead and too large to maintain the individuality of each community.”</li> <li>• We “need to be one Catholic Community.”</li> <li>• Notes mention an “Evaluation Subcommittee” which had no STA representation nor any documentation</li> </ul>
12/17/08	Cluster Transition	Minutes not		Unknown	Report to CTK PC noted this

	Team	available			team to “next meet” on 12/17; minutes not available for any meeting before or after this date
01/24/09	Scheduled meeting of subgroup leaders	No information available			No STA representative
01/28/09	IPPG	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
02/xx/09	Cluster Transition Team	Minutes not available		Unknown	
02/10/09	IPPG Finance	8	0	2	Subsequent finance group report dated 2/22 concludes there should be two fewer parishes
02/11/09	IPPG Subcommittees	10	0	0	Cluster pastor not present
03/xx/09	Vocations Awareness	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
03/03/09	Common Council	Minutes unavailable		Unknown	
03/20/09	ISM	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
03/22/09	Ministries	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
03/25/09	IPPG	Minutes not available		Unknown	
04/02/09	Evangelization	Not listed	Not listed	Unknown	
04/15/09	Faith Formation	7 (usually 100% attendance)	Not listed	1	
04/20/09	IPPG Finance	Minutes not available		Unknown	
04/22/09	IMP	11 + 4 priests	Not listed	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a 4/6 report to CTK parish council, Betsy Stehler notes the creation of the IMP at the 3/25 IPPG meeting</li> <li>• In just its <b>first</b> meeting, this group decides SS and STA should close</li> <li>• Only 1 STA person present and that person has stated it is her job to do what is best for Catholics in Irondequoit, not STA</li> <li>• Did anyone ever advocate for STA?</li> </ul>
04/22/09	IPPG Youth Ministry	11	Not listed	2	
05/06/09	IMP	12 + 3 priests (Fr. Bayer sent representative in his place)	Not listed	1	
05/20/09	IMP	11 + 3 priests	Not listed, but Fr. Bayer not present	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One parish on 7/1/2010</li> <li>• “a duration of 9 months for corporate action to</li> </ul>

					transpire”?
06/10/09	IPPG Finance	14	Not listed	2	
06/17/09	IPPG Finance	Minutes not available; looks like 10 (no priest other than Fr. Bayer)		1?	Interesting to note that the committee lists suggested scenarios. At this late date, how is the information fed back into the IPPG in order to have useful impact? Scenario comments included STA is out of the way and along with SS has the most problems. Where is the supporting documentation for these comments?
11/04/09	IPPG	11 + 4 priests	1	1	
11/11/09	IPPG	13 + 4 priests	Not listed	1	
11/18/09	IPPG	12 + 3 priests	2	1	Cluster pastor not present
12/02/09	IPPG	12 + 3 priests	2 (including 1 from STA)	0	
12/16/09	IPPG	14 + 3 priests	1	1	
01/06/10	IPPG	14 + 4 priests	0	1	
01/20/10	IPPG	14 + 3 priests	0, but Fr. Leone not present	1	
02/03/10	IPPG	14 + 3 priests	Not listed, but Fr. Leone not present	1	
02/24/10	IPPG	11 + 3 priests	3, but Fr. Leone also not present	1	
03/24/10	IPPG	12 + 3 priests	3 (minutes actually reflect Fr. Leone not present)	1	
04/28/10	IPPG	Minutes not available			
05/xx/10	IPPG	Unsure if meeting held			

- Early in the process STA was not represented. Even the pastor did not consistently attend meetings.
- Separate reports on the IPPG meetings were submitted to the CTK parish council, but apparently not to other councils.
- Notes from the November 2008 IPPC meeting (see above) suggest that ultimately 5 worshipping communities would never survive.
- Current STA representative has said it is her job to do what is best for Catholics in Irondequoit, not STA.

Exhibit III



1. St. Margaret Mary, 401 Rodgers Parkway
2. Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 1009 Joseph Avenue
3. St. Michael's Church, 624 Evergreen Street
4. St. Stanislaus Church, 34 St. Stanislaus Street
5. Ukrainian Church of the Epiphany, 202 Carter Street
6. St. Andrew's Church, 923 Portland Avenue
7. St. Joseph's Church, 940 Ridge Road
8. Christ the King Church, 445 Kings Highway South
9. St. Ann's, 1500 Portland Avenue
10. St. Cecelia's Church, 2732 Culver Road
11. Church of the Annunciation, 1754 Horton Street
12. St. Ambrose, 26 Empire Blvd.
13. St. James, 135 Brett Road
14. St. Thomas the Apostle, 4536 St. Paul Boulevard
15. St. Salome, 4292 Culver Road