

Friends of St. Colman Parish
P.O. Box 44062
Cleveland, OH 44144

March 27, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than 3000 personal communication, appealing the recent decision by the Cleveland Catholic Diocese to merge St. Colman Parish with St. Stephen Church, at St. Stephen's were today delivered to the office of Bishop Richard Lennon.

The more than 40 pounds of documents are in support of the formal appeal, also presented to the Bishop by the Friends Of St. Colman Parish, a group representing the parishioners, volunteers and supporters of this 129 year old icon on Cleveland's near West Side.

"We are deeply heartened by the overwhelming outpouring of support from throughout the community, and even the country," states Rita Gaertner, chairperson, Friends Of St. Colman Parish. "To know we are not alone in our determination to preserve and expand the very vital Outreach Ministries provided at St. Colman is very gratifying and encouraging."

The primary basis for the appeal revolves around that Ministry, which weekly serves hundreds of individuals with meals, job training, counseling and referrals. The lack of facilities and support at the St. Stephen site will spell the end to the numerous programs and activities that have become a lifeline of support for the community.

"Throughout the three-year long clustering process, our focus has always been on doing what is best for the community and what will allow us to continue to be an active, viable presence of God's love," added Gaertner. "We are hopefully, prayerfully confident that after reviewing the facts and the outpouring of support, the Diocese will reverse its decision for the good of our community and our faith."

30

St. Colman Parish, located at 2027 West 65 Street, Cleveland, OH 44102, has served the near West Side community with a wide variety of religious, social and service programs since 1880. The Parish campus also houses a School Building which holds the ministries of the African Immigrant Cultural Center, Casa Latina, the cultural and educational program for Latina women and girls and a Health Care Aids jobs training program. In addition, St. Colman's former Convent is now used by Edna House, a residential rehabilitation facility for women recovering from alcohol addiction. Colman Court, a HUD-subsidized home for 33 senior citizens is also a vital part of the St. Colman Parish.

For Further Information Contact: