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Bishop Milan Lach, S.J.
Eparchy of Parma
5000 Rockside Road, Suite 310
Independence, OH 44131

Dear Bishop Lach,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

I hope this correspondence finds Your Grace well. I am writing to you regarding **St. John the Baptist Cathedral Church**. Specifically, I write to Your Grace to present this Canonical Petition in accord with *CCEO* canon 1518 that the parish and church remain in its current state and condition, not only with regards to the church building itself, but also regarding its status as the Cathedral Church for the Eparchy of Parma.

As with my prior correspondence, please understand the spirit and tone with which I address and compose this petition to Your Grace. I do not write out of a spirit of confrontation. Instead, I write with great respect for Your Grace's position and perspective while seeking to protect and vindicate the rights of the Christian faithful of St. John the Baptist Cathedral.

I also write to Your Grace with the understanding that life at the Cathedral Church is not the same as it has been previously. The members of the Cathedral parish, especially the members of the Pastoral Council, have been aware for some time that changes need to be made. In fact, the members of the Pastoral Council have made several suggestions on ways to accommodate the necessary changes at the Cathedral – most notably, ways to generate increased revenues for the parish. This petition is made with these necessary changes in mind.

Furthermore, I write to Your Grace with the recognition that some form of consolidation may be necessary. Myself and members of the Cathedral parish recognize the cultural and ecclesiastical realities. I do not wish to present this petition as though the members of the Cathedral parish are living in the past. Yet, while recognizing that some form of consolidation may need to occur, for the good of the people of God, I write to kindly petition Your Grace to save and protect a beautiful and important sacred place.

St. John the Baptist Cathedral Church has served as a solemn and respectful sacred place in which to celebrate divine worship. It has been the place of baptisms/chrisinations, confessions, weddings, the Divine Liturgy, as well as funerals and many other forms of worship to God. Additionally, as is the case with most every parish church building, the Cathedral has been the center of community life for the people of the parish. It is where the people gather, not only to pray and worship, but also to foster bonds of friendship and unity among themselves. It is little wonder, therefore, that the Cathedral Church holds a place of great significance for the Christian faithful, not only of the parish, but also those who come to visit the Cathedral.

It is the duty, not only of sacred pastors, but also of every Christian, to maintain and protect sacred places as suitable places for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and all other acts of divine worship. Some of the parishioners of St. John the Baptist Cathedral fear that their church is not being adequately safeguarded for use as a sacred place. According to a recent meeting at a neighboring parish, this fear appears to be a reality. It is with this in mind that I present this petition to Your Grace that **St. John the Baptist Cathedral Church remain in its present form and status, not only as a church building dedicated to the worship of God, but also as the Cathedral Church for the Eparchy of Parma and free from suppression, modification, change and/or merging with any other parish of the Eparchy.**

It is the understanding of the faithful of St. John the Baptist that it is your intention to suppress the parish and close St. John the Baptist Church. It is unfortunate that this is not clearly known as no dialogue has taken place with the members of the Cathedral parish regarding the status of the parish or of the Cathedral Church. The parishioners have not been

informed of Your Grace's perspective or intentions, nor have they been given any forum in which to make their own opinions known. The parishioners of the Cathedral parish, especially the members of the Pastoral Council, would gladly welcome a proper forum in which to have open and honest dialogue with Your Grace about the future of the Cathedral Church and of their community of faith.

This lack of open communication has led to great concern among the parishioners of the Cathedral Church that the resources needed to maintain and support the church building are being diminished. However, the parishioners of the Cathedral Church have the necessary means to maintain the beauty and dignity of the church building and are quite dedicated to doing so.

In short, there is no reason why St. John the Baptist Cathedral Church should in any way be altered from its present form and status as both a place of divine worship and as the Cathedral Church. According to the norm of law (cf. canon 873), the status of a church as a place dedicated for divine worship cannot be changed unless there is a grave cause. No grave cause exists in this case. In fact, no cause of any kind exists and has not been articulated to the parishioners. The people of the Cathedral parish are quite dedicated to their community of faith and to their church. They are more than willing to assist in any way necessary to maintain the beauty and decorum of St. John the Baptist Cathedral and the liveliness of their parish community.

Therefore, on behalf of the concerned parishioners of St. John the Baptist Cathedral, I present this petition to Your Grace requesting that the Cathedral Church, as well as the Cathedral parish, remain in its present condition and status. I humbly petition Your Grace that the Cathedral Church remain in use as a place of divine worship and that its status as the Cathedral Church for the Eparchy of Parma be retained. Enclosed along with this Canonical Petition are mandates from the faithful in support of our Petition to Your Grace.

I thank Your Grace for your time and attention to this petition. Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully yours,



Robert J. B. Plummerfelt

Attachments:

21 executed mandates