

129/2012

27 March 2012

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we prepare for the most sacred time of our church year, I know that many of you have questions about the recent decrees from the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome regarding the closing of certain parishes. Accordingly, I want to provide a brief update on the prayerful and thoughtful process I am taking as your bishop to act in the interests of our church, our diocese and all of its people.

As I hope you can appreciate, this is a very complex matter with no easy or perfect solution. With the help of a number of advisors – including members of the clergy, laity and experts in church law – I am carefully studying and seeking to fully understand the decrees. I can assure you that this is not nearly as clear-cut as it may appear on the surface. Although the decrees are brief in length, they are deep in underlying meaning and I continue to receive significant input and clarification.

While I am aware that there are many who hold strong points of view – one way or the other – about what course of action I should take, I have not yet formulated a decision. Thus, no one should speculate or try to read anything between the lines of my message to you today. I assure you that I will share with you the rationale behind whatever action I eventually take.

Be assured that I will act fully in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and with the utmost respect for its governance and authority. I pray that God will guide me and I ask for your prayers.

During this joyous Easter Season let us celebrate the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and stand firm in faith and hope as one body in Christ. Please be assured of my continued prayers for each of you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Richard Lennon*

Bishop of Cleveland