



Diocese of Madison

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For Immediate Release
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Statement

Court denies St. Raphael Cathedral site property tax exemption; parish to consider and thoroughly explore all its options

Madison, WI, October 4, 2016 – Earlier today, Circuit Court Judge Rhonda Lanford released her decision that the St. Raphael Cathedral site does not meet religious exemption qualifications – ruling in favor of the City of Madison and leaving the Cathedral Parish having paid nearly \$100,000 per year in taxes since 2012.

In light of today's judgment denying the Cathedral Parish's request for a summary judgment regarding tax exemption for the Cathedral site, we are disappointed and continue to disagree with the city on this matter.

The property in dispute (204 W. Main) was donated to the Church by Governor James Doty, in 1848, and has been in use by the Catholic community on the Isthmus ever since.

St. Raphael's Cathedral Parish was thrust into this current undesirable situation after arson fire left the 150-plus-year-old Cathedral in ruins, and has been carefully working toward the day when Madison's Cathedral will once again be located on this site, as announced by Bishop Morlino from the Cathedral site in 2007.

After clearing the property, purchasing and clearing the adjacent property, and establishing, blessing, and maintaining a Way of the Cross to preserve the sacred character and religious use of the property until a new cathedral can be built, the Cathedral Parish has made it clear that this is still holy ground and will continue to be used as such.

In the wake of the current judgment, the plan remains to build a new cathedral on this site, to serve the Church and the community for generations to come.

However, roughly \$100,000 a year in taxes is no small sum for the St. Raphael Cathedral Parish community to incur. The Cathedral Parish still maintains two worship sites downtown, offering seven weekend masses in both Spanish and English. The parish has no funds budgeted or readily available for property taxes (a non-issue had arson not destroyed the Cathedral) and the parish has had to pay these property taxes from the insurance proceeds from the Cathedral fire.

St. Raphael's Cathedral Parish will now prayerfully consider all of its options for the Cathedral property in the days and weeks ahead. We ask for your earnest prayers as Bishop Morlino, Msgr. Kevin Holmes (Cathedral Rector), parishioners, and staff deliberate on the future.

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