

Dear People Whom God Loves,

### Future of St. Stans

There are two concerns that I hear from the people of St. Stans and concerns that I have too.

The first is: what happens when I am not able to be your partner. This became more real with the celebration of my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I can be here for four -- five more years. I think this because I am unusually healthy for my age and St. Stans' dedicated staff makes it possible for me to do the essential part of my ministry, which I love to do. When I came here in 1975, there were only four of us—a maintenance person, a secretary, a nun and a priest. Now there are 14.

With the help of staff and so many of our parishioners, I have the privilege of focusing my energy and time on administering the sacraments and having people visit with me in times of sorrow, guilt and other spiritual concerns.

However, I won't last forever. Though I am hoping to have a birthday party when I am 100.

Eventually, there will be a transition to another priest. My best guess is that this will happen in four or five years. All of St. Stans' community are invited and encouraged to ensure that the person who follows me will be able to embrace our vision, carry it on and improve it.

Our parish council and I are engaged in continuing conversation to identify parish needs and how best to include all of you in the process. We welcome advice from you and ideas about how our whole parish can be involved in our future. We will begin to reach out to you more and more in the next weeks and months.

Specifically, in addition to this letter, I will talk about this at all of the masses the weekend of September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

---

The second concern that I have heard from people is the worry that our yearly income is less than the amount of our yearly expenses. I have heard the fear that we will not be able to keep St. Stans open.

We do not have to be afraid. Here is why:

We have money put aside from the renting, the contract for deed, and the sale of our school building that sits across the street from St. Stans. That money has been put aside for large unexpected expenses like needing a new roof. We are in a yearly cash flow problem, but we are financially sound. We do not have a problem now, but it would be foolish not to prevent a future problem by continuing the draw from this fund.

While we have made a good start with your generous regular donations and additional gifts during Christmas and Easter, we need to do more to solve our problems. We will be doing this in the second stage of our three year fund drive. Please know that your generosity is greatly appreciated.

I will be telling you more about our program for spiritual evolution that will begin in November. The whole purpose of church is to help our spiritual evolution. Spiritual evolution is the process of what Jesus said—I have not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. That is, to grow in love so we do what is good not because we are told to, but because we do so out of love of each other.

Smile, God Loves You.

Father Clay