February 24, 2021

Good afternoon. We stand here as the members of the Faith Community of St. Sabina, elected officials, faith leaders, and the community at large. We have come here together to communicate our unwavering support of our pastor, our shepherd, our co-laborer, and our friend, Fr. Michael L. Pfleger. To you, Pastor, we say, we love you, we trust you, we believe you, we are praying for you, we speak life and peace to you and to your spirit, and we cannot wait to have you back with us! We address the following statements to His Eminence, Blase Cardinal Cupich, to all members of the Archdiocesan Independent Review Board and to any other as yet undisclosed entity or individual with authority in this case.

**WE STAND WITH FR. MICHAEL PFLEGER!!!**

For the past seven weeks, we have waited and prayed, waited and fasted, waited and petitioned, waited and cried; and we are still waiting – but we are tired of waiting! How long must we continue to wait? The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services’ investigation is COMPLETE! They have determined that the allegations against Fr. Pfleger are UNFOUNDED. You said, we must wait for the work of other civil agencies to be completed. WE are asking, WHO ARE THESE AGENCIES? WHAT IS THEIR TIMELINE? WHAT IS THE TIMELINE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE? WE NEED CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY! THIS HOLDING PATTERN CANNOT CONTINUE TO GO ON INDEFINITELY!!!

**WE STAND WITH FR. MICHAEL PFLEGER!!!**

As the shepherd of the Catholic Church of Chicago, we appeal to you Cardinal Cupich to expedite this case. We are not asking to circumvent the process, but we cannot accept bureaucratic delays in this dire situation. Know that our church is suffering. **THIS IS PAINFUL!!!** The trauma of this situation is detrimental to our church’s spiritual and economic stability, demoralizing to the hearts and minds of our church members, adversely impacting our ability to meet the needs of the community, and it is devastating to our pastor’s mental and emotional health.

During Fr. Pfleger’s 45-year tenure at the Faith Community of St. Sabina, he has been consistent, dedicated, and faithful. His character and reputation have never been questioned. He IS the impassioned driving force that has built the Faith Community of St. Sabina into a THRIVING CHURCH in every aspect of the word; and he is the inspiring tireless champion of positive change in the community at large.

**WE STAND WITH FR. MICHAEL PFLEGER!!!**
The Faith Community of St. Sabina is a BEACON OF HOPE in the community due to its ongoing outreach to those in need. Prior to Fr Pfleger’s departure, St Sabina was giving out 2000 boxes of food each month, PPE to thousands in community and would have made sure there was a warming center and needed resources available during the extremely cold days. Currently, our church finances are at risk as many donors are pulling away due to this uncertainty. To date, we have lost more than $500,000 in previously committed funds to our community outreach programs. Donors have expressed their distrust, not in Fr. Pfleger, but in this investigation process and they are holding funds, waiting to see if Fr. Pfleger returns.

In a day when the very fabric of the Black Catholic Community is in jeopardy, we will not sit back and watch these allegations hurt our community and legacy. This process being dragged out with a lack of urgency perpetuates the belief that the Archdiocese of Chicago does not care about Black Catholics. We have seen you close numerous historical Black Catholic Churches in Chicago. Your lack of transparency in this process of deciding the future of Fr. Pfleger, and consequently the future of the Faith Community of St. Sabina, is affirming that belief.

This is what we know:

1. DCFS has informed the Archdiocese that the allegations are UNFOUNDED.
2. Civil Lawyers presented a case to the Archdiocesan Independent Review Board confirming that allegations against Fr. Pfleger were not corroborated.
3. According to the Canon Lawyer’s statement to the Review Board, Fr. Pfleger should be reinstated.
4. Even with this information, the Review Board met on Saturday, February 20 and still made no decision!

Therefore, these are our requests:

1. EXPEDITE this process toward resolution, since the DCFS investigation is complete!
2. Give us a timeline when we can expect the Archdiocesan investigation to be COMPLETE!
3. REINSTATE our pastor so that he can continue the work of faith and justice to which God has called him and the outreach the community needs and deserves.

WE STAND WITH FR. MICHAEL PFLEGER!!!