



Christopher Marte

紐約市市議員馬泰 Council Member, District 1

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June 21, 2023

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop, Archdiocese of New York
1011 1st Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Subject: Merging of St. Mary's Church with Our Lady of Sorrows Church

Dear Cardinal Dolan,

I write to you regarding the proposal to merge St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church at 440 Grand Street with Our Lady of Sorrows Church at 213 Stanton Street. I am glad that this would not result in the closing of St. Mary's Church, but I am concerned with what this would mean for capacity at St. Mary's, particularly regarding community programming.

Father Andrew O'Connor, who was made pastor of St. Mary's in 2017, has been a community anchor for the Lower East Side for years, overseeing well-attended programming for the community and supported by an ever growing congregation deeply invested in their neighborhood. Programs have and continue to cover everything from the arts and music to writing to services dedicated to our senior and youth populations.

The area around St. Mary's has seen a booming residential population with the completion of Essex Crossing and two new buildings on Norfolk and Suffolk Streets, and two affordable buildings on the way along Broome Street. With these new developments, we can only expect the congregation at St. Mary's to grow exponentially, and the need for these programs and an in-house pastor to grow with it. The communities of St. Mary's and Our Lady of Sorrows are very distinct and well deserve their own congregations and pastors.

A merging of these two churches would go against the trends of residential growth and community needs in the Lower East Side, and would fracture a congregation that continues to grow in size and strength. I urge you to consider continuing the term of Father O'Connor as pastor at St. Mary's, and to make sure that the robust programming that has supported the Lower East Side up to this point can continue to flourish under his leadership.

Cardinal Dolan

June 21, 2023

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Marte". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping letters and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christopher Marte
New York City Council Member