



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEEO SEMINARY, OVERBROOK

100 East Wynnewood Road • Wynnewood, PA 19096

July 13, 2018

Dear Friends of Saint Charles Seminary and Residents of Lower Merion Township:

I write to share information about an upcoming Lower Merion Township Commissioners meeting which may have a severely negative impact on the future of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary. As you may know, the seminary board recommended in June 2016 that the seminary seek a new location in partnership with a local Catholic college and that the seminary property be sold to an interested buyer. This difficult decision to leave the current campus was made after considering the much higher cost to renovate the seminary buildings for our 160 seminarians.

Now, the future for these seminarians is suddenly being threatened by a newly proposed Lower Merion Township ordinance, which may block the sale of seminary property, and cut off funding necessary to continue the seminary's vital mission.

On July 18, 2018, the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners will consider designating all or some of the seminary property as historical and restricting the development of the property. Such an action would significantly reduce the value of the property and jeopardize any possible sale.

The sustainability of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary is contingent upon its ability to maximize the value of the current campus. An excessively restrictive historic designation imposed by the township would threaten the seminary's mission and its survival, dashing the hopes and dreams of seminarians preparing to serve the faithful as servant leaders and priests after the heart of Jesus Christ.

The suddenness of the ordinance being proposed, and the process and timing of the township's action seems highly questionable given our more than five year study process, which involved local residents and the township. To date, the township has never consulted with the seminary about the designation. The July 18 vote comes as our pending sale to Main Line Health is in its final stages. These facts can only suggest that the township's true intention is not historical preservation, but rather to thwart the sale of the seminary property.

I ask that you please consider attending the township meeting on July 18 at 7:30 p.m. at the Township Administration Building, 75 East Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore. At the meeting we will urge the township commissioners to postpone a vote on this designation and enter into a process of meaningful engagement to define a new vision for the property with all the stakeholders – the Township, the public and the eventual purchaser. If you cannot attend, I ask that you please pray for a positive outcome that will benefit all the parties, but especially our seminarians.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Rector, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary