

# **CLUSTER RESPONSE**

Submitted by

## **THE HUNGARIAN CLUSTER**

**St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish**

**St. Emeric Parish**

**St. Margaret of Hungary Parish**

November 15, 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

The cluster delegates of the three member parishes of the Hungarian Cluster as defined by the Diocese of Cleveland held twelve joint committee meetings under the direction of Rev. Mr. Daniel Galla in accordance with the Cluster Planning and Coordination Handbook. The cluster delegates also obtained continuous feedback from the membership as well as from the parish council and finance committee of their respective parishes. The results of their activity requires the Hungarian Cluster Committee to recommend that **all three parishes remain open.**

**PART I.**

**SUPPORTING FACTS COMMON TO ALL THREE PARISHES**

## PART I. SUPPORTING FACTS COMMON TO ALL THREE PARISHES

Over the course of the cluster committee meetings of the Hungarian Cluster, comprising St. Elizabeth, St. Emeric and St. Margaret parishes, the efforts to follow the process defined in the Cluster Planning and Coordination Handbook (CPCH) have produced results contrary to Bishop Lennon's proposal recommending that no more than one of the three member parishes continue to function as a Hungarian parish.

During the process, we repeatedly identified some unique characteristics of each Hungarian parish that resulted in a conclusion that all three parishes continue their individual existence. Therefore, we submit this recommendation that **all three parishes remain open**.

We list the following facts supporting our unanimous conclusion above, which facts are common to all three member parishes:

- The demographics of the three parishes identified in the cluster reach across 8 counties of the Diocese of Cleveland.
- The three churches are strategically located: St. Elizabeth of Hungary is on the East Side, St. Emeric is on the West Side, while St. Margaret of Hungary is on the Far East Side of the metropolitan area. A single location will not effectively serve the needs of all or even a majority of Hungarian Catholics in the diocese.
- A strong bond of loyal supporters and faithful help to keep and sustain the parishes.
- Our churches are spiritual and cultural centers for parishioners – and even Hungarians of other denominations – and that enables us to pass on the spiritual and cultural heritage and traditions to subsequent generations.
- The process defined in the CPCH is more applicable to territorial parishes' clustering initiatives. (It should be noted that the three Hungarian parishes are not territorial.)

Parts II, III, and IV. of this document consist of a list of facts and a presentation of the plan individually unique to each of the three member parishes of the Hungarian Cluster, namely St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Emeric and St. Margaret parishes respectively. The list of supporting rationale from each member parish indicates that each is a **vibrant parish**.

We request that our unanimous recommendation that all three parishes remain open be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

St. Elizabeth of Hungary

St. Emeric

St. Margaret of Hungary

Pastor/Administrator:

*Maria J. J. J. J.*  
*William J. J. J.*

*Rev. Fr. Ladislava Rosta*

Parish Council President:

*Jakub M. J. J.* *Racut Kozz*

Finance Committee Chairperson:

*W. J. J.*

*Nicholas E. J. J.* *Suzanne J. J.* *Suzanne J. J.*

**PART II.**

**ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY PARISH**

### Comment Form to accompany the Proposed Cluster Plan

*It is the responsibility of the Pastor, Administrator, or Parish Life Coordinator to see that this form is completed and included with the submittal of the proposed Cluster Plan. This form provides a format with regard to Step 10 on page 17 in the CPC Handbook that indicates the proposed Cluster Plan is to be accompanied by a comment relative to the cluster plan signed by each Pastor, Administrator, or Parish Life Coordinator and the Parish Pastoral Council chairperson and Finance Council chairperson. These comments can address support for the proposed Cluster Plan as well as any concerns.*

**Comment by Pastor, Administrator, or Parish Life Coordinator:**

Signature: Fr. Angelo Antal

**Comment by Parish Pastoral Council chairperson:**

Signature: William Gambor

**Comment by Finance Council chairperson:**

Signature: W. R. [Signature]



# St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church

P.O. Box 20175  
Cleveland, Ohio 44120-0175  
Phone (216) 231-0325

Reverend Andras Antal  
Administrator

November 3, 2008,

Diocese of Cleveland  
Bishop Richard Lennon  
East 9<sup>th</sup> and Superior Avenue  
Cleveland, OH

Dear Bishop Lennon:

St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish has been very active in the Vibrant Parish life program and fully supports efforts to address many of the current situations facing the diocese. We have had a number of presentations and discussions amongst our Parish members, Parish Council and Finance Committee concerning these issues and their impact upon our parish. Our parish members have also been kept apprised of our cluster meetings and remain very interested in the diocese' decision regarding the longevity of our parish.

We would like to express our appreciation to you for placing us into the "Hungarian Cluster" recognizing our ethnic mission and the practicality for collaborating amongst other Hungarian parishes rather than nearby territorial parishes. Meetings between representatives from each of the Hungarian cluster parishes established that we are all in very similar situations. Most of our long term parishioners are elderly and many now reside in nursing homes or are homebound requiring a visiting priest who speaks Hungarian (Magyar) to meet their spiritual needs. Our newer parishioners (recent immigrants to America) are young families and are somewhat constrained due to their language skills, though they are all learning English. It is our feeling that their children, in particular, however, must be taught catechism in their native language to insure a complete and full understanding of our faith tradition. This will eliminate the possibility of error because of misunderstanding or mis-interpreting something heard in a language without being fully cognizant of nuances and connotative expressions.

It is interesting to note that the trend since the late 1800s has been for many Hungarians to immigrate to and establish themselves into "Hungary's second largest city": Cleveland, Ohio. They sought opportunities in a city that was flourishing with industry and that continues to provide opportunities. In the early days it was also important to reside in a

close-knit ethnic community which was centered in the Buckeye-Woodland neighborhood and later on the near West Side. Each of these communities would not be complete until there was the founding of a Hungarian Catholic church to serve the faithful.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish was the first of these churches. This occurred after complications arose between the Slavic and incoming Magyar (Hungarian) parishioners at St. Ladislaus. On December 18, 1891 Bishop Felix M. Boff, interim vicar of the Cleveland Diocese, requested Archbishop Kolos Vaszary, Prince-Primate of Hungary, to send a Hungarian priest to Cleveland to found a Hungarian parish. His request was accepted and Reverend Karoly Bohm, pastor of Marianosztra Church, was sent to Cleveland as the first officially delegated Hungarian Catholic Priest. He arrived in Cleveland on Dec. 1, 1892 and in less than a year, on September 8, 1893, the new St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church was dedicated followed by the opening of a school that same year with an enrollment of 70 students.

The parish grew and by 1925 the parish and school were at their peak enrollment. Approximately 1500 families were members of the parish. Annually, there were more than 100 weddings, 450 baptisms, and 200 funerals. The school population consisted of more than 1200 students, 15 Ursuline Sisters, and 1 lay teacher. The church and school together generated over 2300 members of various adult and young adult societies. The parish continued to flourish until the late 1950's when sub-urbanization began in earnest.

By the mid 1970's the surrounding neighborhood had declined and mostly only those remaining in the neighborhood or with a need for Hungarian language continued as parishioners. But a noticeable trend had begun. Many of the Hungarian people of Cleveland who had moved to the suburbs began to recognize the parish as a place of pilgrimage to their heritage and ancestors who immigrated at the turn of the century, after WWI, WWII and again after the 1956 Revolution. They recognized that this First Hungarian Roman Catholic Church in America was the nucleus for their family's Catholic start in the "new world". Thus began a trend of attending Masses said for deceased relatives, coming for special religious events (Corpus Christi, Christmas, Easter, Mothers-Fathers Day etc.) or cultural feasts such as the annual feast of St. Istvan (Stephen) on August 20<sup>th</sup> or our patron St. Elizabeth on November 19<sup>th</sup>. These 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation "parishioners" continue to be married and have their children baptized at the Church as tributes to their heritage, parents and grandparents.

The recent downfall of Communism has had an even more positive impact upon our parish. Many new immigrant Hungarian families chose Cleveland because of the historical link to previous generations and because of the reputation of our Hungarian Catholic community for providing guidance, support, networking, jobs and friendship to fellow Hungarian Catholics. We think of this as a type of Catholic-Immigrant evangelization. These immigrant families have also had a corresponding positive effect upon St. Elizabeths' as they have breathed new life into the congregation with first communions, confirmations and marriages along with the need for the parish to provide religious instruction to these young parents and their children in their first and native language (Hungarian).

These new situations compliment the many activities of this unique and dynamic parish which continues outreach to Hungarian parishioners whether it be on Sunday at the Church, in nursing homes and hospitals or activities such as taping readings of the gospel for the Sunday Hungarian radio program and finally providing a place of pilgrimage for later generations who desire to keep the link between their faith and heritage by attending functions at our designated "national historical place" church.

Finally, it is interesting to note that for our parish, consolidating (even with a geographic parish) may have been easier 25 years ago. At that time our parish was probably evenly divided between foreign born and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation American born families, many still residing in the immediate area. Today, with the recent arrivals of Hungarian immigrants (most from the Transylvania region that was ceded to Romania at the end of the World War I) and the dying out of our 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> generation parishioners, our households are probably of a ratio that is 75% foreign born vs. 25% that are 2<sup>nd</sup> or later generation American born. This new situation makes clustering with a territorial parish much more problematic given the language needs of the majority of our parishioners and the distance to other parishes a burden to our older members.

This should not be taken that St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church does not fully understand the current situation of the diocese regarding a logical utilization of resources such as staffing. We are fully supportive of these initiatives and might like to remind the diocese that informal collaborations and cooperation between the Hungarian parishes particularly when considering staffing needs, calendar and event planning has taken place for many years. It should also be noted that the Hungarian parishes view each other as being as close as family members and that though there may be some occasional "family squabbling" (probably inherent to our Magyar genes) this should not be confused with the utmost respect and desire to help and support each other when needed. Perhaps one of the more positive outcomes of the many cluster meetings has been to formalize these collaborative relationships.

Upon receiving your letter and undertaking the long process of discernment to arrive at a single Hungarian parish it became very apparent that we would not be able to achieve this pre-set conclusion because there was no full understanding of the basis for closing 2 of the 3 parishes. This caused us to further question whether the diocese had a full understanding of how our parishes were set up and operated. We attempted to inform the diocesan delegate of these factors which you are able to see in the meeting minutes. We would like to again summarize those points and bring them directly to your attention as part of our formal submission. These include:

1. Our parish, like the others, has a single priest who ministers to the Catholic Hungarian faithful using their native tongue. Our priest, the same as St. Emeric's, is not a diocesan priest. These priests were permitted to come to America (Cleveland) to minister at a Hungarian parish. We pointed out that should their parishes close these priests are to relocate to another diocese with a Hungarian parish in need. (There are 3 or 4 places currently recruiting Hungarian priests for pastoral duty in United States and Canada). St.

Margaret's priest, who is diocesan, is in his mid 80's and eligible to retire. The net result of closing two parishes would be to increase the workload of the remaining priest while losing the services of the other two through either relocation or retirement. The result would be a net loss of religious clergy in the diocese.

2. Our parish continues to have parishioners. Many of our parishioners and those of the other parishes have a bonafide need and right to use their native Hungarian (Magyar) language to worship God through the Mass and Sacraments. The need to receive and fully understand the spiritual guidance from a priest through their first language can not be overstated. This is not only the case for those coming to America before or after the 1956 Revolution, but the young families that have more recently immigrated since the end of Communism. Closing any of the three parishes would cause those parishioners to select either a longer more costly commute to the remaining Hungarian parish or to attend a closer territorial parish that uses a less familiar language and practice. This second alternative would result in increasing the number of families served by the priest(s) at the receiving territorial parish compounding (not lessening) the receiving priests' workload and the diocese's priest shortage.

3. Our parish is without debt, is solvent, and has savings. We have not requested nor received any financial support from the diocese. We place little strain upon the diocese's other resources as most sacramental needs have been provided for by visiting Hungarian Bishops. We built our church, school, rectory and hall with monies donated from our members and recruited our pastors with one exception from Europe. The parish has duly reported and paid the diocese their required portion or assessments on our weekly contributions and we are not in arrears for any diocesan requirement.

The appraisal of our complex has not shown anything of which we were unaware. Of the main items, the parking lot resurfacing has been planned for next year as we've had a multi-phase concrete project replacing concrete in areas around the church and rectory. Our plans were to await resurfacing of the parking lot until after the cement work was completed so that we could avoid the heavy cement trucks driving onto a new parking lot. Of the other items it should be noted that included in this amount is tuck pointing for the hall building along with upgraded windows and other work totaling almost half of the estimated 5 year capital projects. Though sufficient funds to address all of the listed maintenance items exists in our building trust fund, you should be made aware that we made a conscious decision a number of years ago to "limp" or minimally maintain the hall building thru as many years as practical in lieu of demolition (which was discussed with the diocese a number of years ago). Today the hall building has a sound roof and is used but one afternoon each year for folk dancing during our annual Fall Festival. All other events are held in the church basement's air conditioned hall (where you met many of our parishioners after your visit).

Based upon these and the other factors presented during the cluster meetings to your representative along with input from the parish council, finance committee and members, we have concluded that St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church remains vibrant and operational and therefore should remain open. Please be assured we will constantly re-assess the situation given our demographics but none of the undersigned committee

believe now is the time to close our parish and hope that you will consider this information when you make a final determination and decision.

Finally, our committee recognizes and understands that for a matter as serious as the closing of a parish so grave a matter should be addressed only between a particular parish and its' Bishop. We therefore did not feel it would be proper for us to interfere in the relationship of the other Hungarian parishes concerning their own determination regarding viability and appreciated their similar attitude regarding our parish.


Lastly, the parish representatives have stated on many occasions that as faithful Catholics we acknowledge and accept our obligations regarding the actions you may take as Bishop in accordance with the proper norms of your office. We would hope that you will take time needed to analyze these factors and know that we remain open to providing you with any additional information you may need.

Sincerely,



Ilonka Hudak

Maria Jannossy

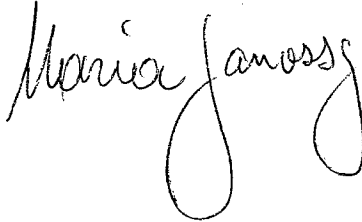


Robert Purgert



William Yambor

Cluster Committee



**PART III.**

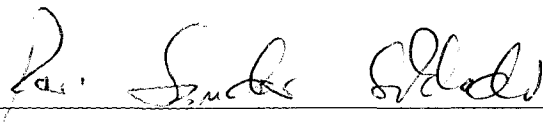
**ST. EMERIC PARISH**

## Comment Form to accompany the Proposed Cluster Plan

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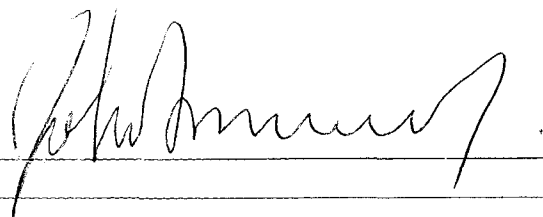
**Comment by Pastor, Administrator, or Parish Life Coordinator:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



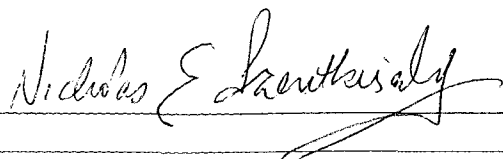
**Comment by Parish Pastoral Council chairperson:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Comment by Finance Council chairperson:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



PART III.

ST. EMERIC PARISH

I. SUPPORTING FACTS AND QUALITIES

A. Pastoral care

1. Parish is assured a priest ( administrator) for the foreseeable future, pending only approval by the local Bishop.
2. Fr. Antal of St. Elizabeth and Fr. Siklodi of St. Emeric mutually support one another during vacations, illness or other causes of absence. Support services include celebration of Mass, confessions, visitation of the sick, counseling, and funerals.
3. Parish's financial state is stable for foreseeable future
4. The parish has gained 50 new members this past year
5. Important liturgical parish events during the year in Hungarian, according to Hungarian traditions:
  - a. Lenten retreat ( in Hungarian )
  - b. Stations of Cross, Sundays during Lent
  - c. Traditional Hungarian Easter Procession
  - d. May crowning and first communion celebration
  - e. Outdoor Corpus Christi procession
  - f. First Saturday devotions by Fatima Family
  - g. Memorial Mass for Hungarian veterans
  - h. Memorial Mass for deceased members of Holy Name Society
  - i. Christmas Concert on Christmas Eve
  - j. Traditional Hungarian mid-night mass on Christmas Eve
  - k. Christmas Pageant - religious event in the church - by the Hungarian Boy and Girl Scouts
  - l. Rosary devotions in the church every Sunday before Mass
6. Organizations of the Parish:
  - a. Altar Guild
  - b. Holy Name Society
  - c. Fatima Family
  - d. Choir
7. Guest organization: Opus Dei - weekly meetings and church services
8. Member volunteers as Lectors, Ushers, Eucharistic Ministers, Hungarian Organist, servers
9. Visitation by priest of the elderly in nursing homes and the shut-ins at home, especially needed for those Catholics who require spiritual service in their native

Hungarian language

10. In the past, priest had resurrected and served the German community with holy day Masses at St. Emeric until they made another church their home. If that church were to close, then St. Emeric welcomes the Catholic German community again with open arms.
11. Frequent host for international religious visitors and dignitaries from Rome, Hungary, Germany, Transylvania, etc.
12. Most Catholics attending the yearly Hungarian World Congress during the week of Thanksgiving in downtown Cleveland attend the Sunday mass at St. Emeric.

B. St. Emeric is a parish that serves the needs of:

1. Those who require spiritual guidance in the Hungarian language
2. The youth of the Hungarian community, namely the scouts, the Hungarian School which depend on the parish facilities for survival and at the same time participate in parish activities
3. Spiritual needs of the Hungarian faithful not only living on the west side of Cleveland but the entire diocese because of the church's accessibility by three interstates, public transportation

C. Secular Hungarian organizations and their activities: These activities reflect cultural traditions that are intimately connected to the Church because of Hungary's 1,000+ years of Christianity. Hungary's first king, St. Stephen, dedicated the nation to the Blessed Mother asking for her protection and intercession more than 1,000 years ago. This is reflected in cultural traditions also.

1. St. Emeric Craft Club; Volunteers at dinners and bazaars
2. Hungarian Boy Scouts, Hungarian Girl Scouts --- Hungarian Scout Center Building is on Parish grounds, and its use is under contract with the Diocese. Weekly meetings on Fridays plus more numerous activities for the youth during the week
3. The American Hungarian Friends of Scouting, the support organization of the Hungarian Scouts in Cleveland meets bimonthly at St. Emeric on Wednesday evenings. This organization is a key supporter of many activities at the church and the Parish.
4. The Hungarian Boy and Girl Scouts is the largest Hungarian youth organization in Ohio and its members are key participants at church services and at parish activities.
5. Hungarian Scout Folk Ensemble --- youth programs in Scout Center building every Tuesday and more
6. Hungarian School – classes every Monday evening in the classrooms and in the Scout Center. Hungarian tradition of "Veni Sancte" at beginning of school year

and "Te Deum" at end of year services held in the church.

7. The United Hungarian Societies hold two national commemorative events per year, with prayer at beginning and end.
  8. The Hungarian Veterans Organization - various activities, incl. commemorative mass for Veterans.
  9. Knights of Order of St. Laszlo – active members of parish , sponsor annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Marapocs.
  10. Also meeting place for The Cleveland Hungarian Development Panel, and the Hungarian Cultural Garden Committees.
  11. Host for Sacred Concerts by visiting artists.
  12. The Annual Scouts Awards Banquet, held in the Parish Hall. This event recognizes and encourages the youth in their pursuit of activities that emanate from and reflect their Christian faith in serving God, Country and Humanity.
- D. Other positive characteristics of St. Emeric Parish:
1. The facilities, buildings are in very good condition.
  2. Centrally located: easily accessible from 3 major interstates, I-90, I-71, and I-77, the Memorial Shoreway, and by means of mass transit (RTA light rail, buses)
  3. Changing demographics in the Near East Side and the Buckeye Road area caused an influx of a large number of Hungarians to western Cleveland and to the western suburbs. St. Emeric is the only church of the Hungarian Cluster which is located on Cleveland's West Side.
  4. Parking: by agreement with the City of Cleveland the large capacity parking lot of West Side Market can be used for parking. This means no upkeep nor snow plowing expenses for the parish on the parking lot.
  5. The Scout Center is self-sustaining. It has a twenty-year lease from the Diocese and it does not depend on support from the Parish.

## II. PLAN FOR A VIBRANT PARISH

### A.. Pastoral care

1. Assured. As stated under Paragraph 1.1, Fr. Antal of St. Elizabeth and Fr. Siklodi of St. Emeric mutually support one another during vacations, illness or other causes of absence. Support services include Mass celebration, confessions, visitation of the sick, spiritual counseling, funeral services in Hungarian.

### B. Church membership

1. Growing. Fifty new members joined so far this year. Plan to increase evangelization efforts in the Hungarian community.

2. Plan outreach to Hungarian Catholics who have drifted away from the Church.

C. Mass attendance

1. Continuous improvement plan is initiated.
2. Work with the youth organizations for special dedicated intentions.

D. Activities

1. Continue and strengthen present activities and develop new programs to meet the needs of our members.

E. Finances

1. Receipts exceed disbursements
2. Savings provide substantial reserve and income.
3. We continue to receive substantial donations and bequests.
4. Parish social activities generate additional income
5. The parish is able to maintain the facilities without additional fundraising
6. Volunteers provide numerous services, like office workers, organist at no cost to the Parish.

F. Building, utilization of facilities

1. Maintenance and upkeep of facilities continues, as needed
2. The facilities are fully utilized by our organizations. Donations for their use are expected and are always received.

G. Cultural needs

1. Continue the Liturgy in Hungarian
2. Pass the Christian Hungarian traditions to the future generation

H. Methods of sharing

1. Coordination of Mass schedules with St. Elizabeth
2. St. Emeric's organist is often requested to play the organ at St. Elizabeth.
3. Sharing of choirs with St. Elizabeth during significant events

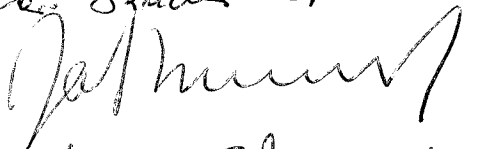
Submitted by:

ST. EMERIC PARISH

Pastor/Administrator



Parish Council President



Finance Committee Chairperson



**PART IV.**

**ST. MARGARET OF HUNGARY PARISH**

## Comment Form to accompany the Proposed Cluster Plan

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**Comment by Pastor, Administrator, or Parish Life Coordinator:**

Signature: Rw. Fr. Ladislav Rosko

**Comment by Parish Pastoral Council chairperson:**

Signature: Rouven Koryz

**Comment by Finance Council chairperson:**

Signature: Severine Juhász Srotic

## Proposal for St. Margaret of Hungary

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In the process of discernment, the St. Margaret of Hungary cluster team has determined based on the results of the assessment of our ministry and staffing that our parish community is active and vibrant. Although we do not have all the programs of the large parishes throughout our diocese, we feel we appropriately meet the needs of our people and the community in general. We are a small sized parish, but that in reality has become one of our greatest assets. Those who have come to call our community home especially in recent years appreciate the closeness of gathering together in an environment conducive to spiritual reflection and worship.

In the case of St. Margaret, there are many attributes that our parishioners and benefactors appreciate including the following:

### Location –

- Within easy access by highway, our location on Lander Road in Orange Village is minutes away from the I-480 and I-271 interchange easily accessible from all parts of northeast Ohio.

### Property –

- Approximately 13 acres of wooded and open land adjoining Orange Village Municipal Center and Community Park and offering opportunities for expansion. The property is adorned with lifelike statues of St. Joseph, Sacred Heart and the scene on Calvary which also serves as a memorial for fallen parishioners. In addition, the Stations of the Cross surround an outdoor worship area in an all natural setting.

### Facilities –

- Primary structure – church, social hall and kitchen built in 1989
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine – a frequently visited outdoor place of worship set in a peaceful wooded setting offering visitors a place to pray, meditate and reflect
- Rectory – in excess of 10 rooms of living space
- Out building – 2 car garage, meeting room, warming kitchen and storage areas
- Easy access – no stairs with convenient close parking for disabled and ample parking for large events.

Throughout our history, the parishioners and faithful supporters guided by the Holy Spirit have worked to be self sufficient. We have planned and proposed solutions to our challenges with a vision to the future. We have invested in support of that vision. We have worked hard to remain self sufficient and vibrant. We have moved forward respecting and acknowledging our past while building and planning for our future.

## Proposal for St. Margaret of Hungary

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This is evident in our initiatives to purchase the Lander Road property in the 1970's with hopeful anticipation of relocating and avoiding the likely closure if remaining in the Buckeye Road neighborhood. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's the property was a frequent gathering point utilized for summer events and special occasions including processions and outdoor masses at the shrine.

In the mid to late 1980's, we began securing our future by initiating the move and rebuilding of the parish community on the Lander Road site. The approval of the diocese, the pastors of the parishes in the area, the community of Orange Village and the sale of the Cleveland properties paved the way for the relocation and our hope for the future.

Since relocation, our parish has remained in solid financial standing. We have opened our doors for neighboring Catholics to worship. The numbers of parishioners have remained stable over the past ten years with signs of increase in the past 5 years. The recent closings of neighboring St. Jude and St. Wenceslaus churches have brought additional faithful to our parish in search of traditional church services in a comfortable environment. All this has taken place in the spirit of evangelization, cooperation and faith.

Today, the primary areas of challenge identified in our assessment are centered on two factors which appear beyond our control:

- Our pastor is of retirement age leaving us with an uncertain future for pastoral care for the faithful of our parish community.
- The fear of closure and the loss of our small faith based community are resulting in uncertainty for the faithful.

With all this in mind, we would like to propose some options that would permit keeping the parish community of St. Margaret of Hungary open and active for the foreseeable future. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather ideas to promote further discussions to address the primary challenges facing our parish and the diocese as a whole.

- Assign a new pastor to replace retiring pastor.
- Staff the parish with a semi retired parish priest.
- Share pastoral care with resources from neighboring parishes.
- Acquire the services of a local religious order to provide pastoral care.
- Establish the guidance of a deacon to assist parish administration with support of part time priest(s).

Further to this, our parish community welcomes the opportunity to play an even more active role in our diocese and the communities which we serve to the extent of making our facilities and grounds available for spiritual gatherings (retreats, days of recollection, special services, focus group worships, etc.). These activities would contribute to the benefit of the diocese while helping increase the vibrancy of our parish.

## **Proposal for St. Margaret of Hungary**

Page 3 of 3

As all this demonstrates, we are open and willing to take into consideration alternatives which may be unique to the typical parish model while remaining in full compliance with canon law and meeting the needs of our diocese. In any of these scenarios, I believe the lay persons of this parish community would be willing to take an increasingly active role in serving their church in capacities that would align with a vision for the future.

Challenging times require creative approaches to keep the presence of the church in the lives of Catholic people in this area. We remain open and receptive to how St. Margaret of Hungary Parish can play an active role in support of this mission.

**PART V.**

**SUMMARY**

## PART V.

### SUMMARY

The cluster delegates of the three member parishes of the Hungarian Cluster as defined by the Diocese of Cleveland held twelve joint committee meetings under the direction of Rev. Mr. Daniel Galla in accordance with the Cluster Planning and Coordination Handbook. The cluster delegates also obtained continuous feedback from the membership as well as from the parish council and finance committee of their respective parishes. The results of their activity require the Hungarian Cluster Committee to recommend that **all three parishes remain open.**

Hungary's Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty was the Archbishop of Esztergom and the Primate of Hungary from February 1946 through February 1974. His voice was muted by the atheistic Communist regime on December 26, 1948 which dictatorship imprisoned and brutally tortured him until the 1956 Hungarian Revolution restored his short-lived freedom. He lived in exile at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest until September 28, 1971 when an agreement between the Holy See, the Soviet Union and its puppet Communist Hungarian regime forced the transfer of his exile to Vienna. Cardinal Mindszenty remained a most respected symbol and a steadfast defender of Christianity and Catholicism in the face of atheistic communism, not only in Hungary but throughout the world. His words below were heard during a Celebration of Mass at Cleveland's St. John Cathedral in the presence of His Excellency Bishop Anthony Pilla, Cleveland's mayor the Honorable Ralph J. Perk, and more than two thousand faithful on the occasion of his visit to our three Hungarian churches in Cleveland in May 1974:

*"Our first constitutional king Saint Stephen, who was a steadfast bastion of Christianity in Europe, left us a legacy in the form of four sanctuaries: the Hungarian church, the community of Hungarian believers in Christ, the Hungarian schools and the sanctuary of the family. It may be very possible that you would be able to attend the Celebration of Mass closer to your home but if there is a Hungarian church with a Mass in your native language, you must attend that . . .*

*You must be devoted to those who came here ahead of you in the 19th century, those who through their hard work and sacrifice raised these churches for themselves and for their offsprings. It is most important that you educate your children in the Hungarian language as well, the language that was defended and made great by king St. Stephen, the language that was spoken by his son St. Emeric, the same language that was spoken by both St. Elizabeth of Hungary and St. Margaret of Hungary."*

For the solid reasons presented on the pages of this Cluster Plan we, the Cluster Committee of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, St. Emeric Parish and St. Margaret of Hungary Parish respectfully request that our wish to leave the aforementioned parishes in existence for the foreseeable future be respected and granted.