

## Request

*Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish  
819 Cathedral Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19128*

September 24, 2008


Reverend Jim St. George  
4101 Freeland Avenue  
Manayunk, Phila., PA 19128

Dear Reverend St. George,

We, the Roman Catholic priests of the East Falls, Manayunk and Roxborough areas, respectfully request that your listing in **The Review** be placed under an appropriate heading. Some people might be misled into thinking that St. Miriam is a Roman Catholic institution. You and we certainly don't wish to misrepresent ourselves to the public.

Respectfully,

Rev. Joseph Devlin  
Rev. Michael Filippello  
Rev. Leonard Lewandowski  
Rev. James Lyons  
Rev. James Martin  
Rev. James McGuinn  
Msgr. Joseph McGeown  
Rev. Francis McKee  
Rev. Paul Obrimski  
Rev. Francis Sabatini



cc: The Review

Most Rev. Daniel Thomas, Regional Bishop  
Rev. Joseph Logrip, Regional Vicar

## Response



An Open Letter from the Pastor of Saint Miriam...  
“We certainly don't wish to misrepresent ourselves to the public.”

Dear Monsignor McGeown,

As pastor of Saint Miriam Parish, I wanted to publicly thank you for your letter to The Review. It is good to have the opportunity to explain our differences and similarities. I am only sorry that you never preferred to meet with me in person. I am even sorrier that, as a Christian, you never welcomed me, or my parish community of Saint Miriam, but instead chose to make this complaint your first introduction. It is sad, isn't it; how we, as Christians, tend to constantly look for silly ways to divide ourselves instead of working together to serve those in need?

Msgr. McGeown, I am not sure what 'appropriate heading' you would feel comfortable with us being listed under? We are not any of the various protestant denominations, nor are we Jewish or non-sectarian. We are Catholic. And, as much as you may dislike it, the Roman Church no more owns the word "Catholic" than it does "Church."

And, as a Catholic parish, albeit not a Roman one, we make great efforts in ensuring that people understand we are not a Roman parish. In fact, if you took the time to actually read the editorials, our advertising materials, or even took a moment to look at our logo, you would find that we very clearly inform everyone who and what we are. After all, that is why many come, because we are not the Roman Church.

You see, Saint Miriam accepts all those whom you reject: the gay and lesbian, those of differing opinions or denominations, those in mixed-religious marriages, those who are divorced and who did not receive or seek annulment, those who are otherwise and somehow 'just not right' – everyone. Everyone is welcome at the Table at our parish community. Period. So, we would be pleased to have you help us explain to others that we are NOT Roman Catholic because, after all, that is our goal.

That said; let's take a moment to see where we are similar: we are both Catholic priests, we are both pastors of our respective parishes trying to serve God's creation, and we both are validly ordained and, therefore, we enjoy valid Apostolic Succession. We both perform legitimate sacraments. We both use the same Sacramentary, and our Liturgies and Catholic Masses are of the same, valid historic order. We both honor the 7 Sacraments of our shared Catholic heritage, and we both earn far less than many professions. And, yet, we still serve as we are called by Him who called us.

And, so now how are we different? Well, as defined above, you restrict access to Holy Communion while we believe it is not a reward for being good, but rather a source of strength given freely to all people by our Lord and Savior. Therefore, we have an open Table and welcome without reservation those on the margins and the oppressed. Also, we honor the divine feminine, as you do, through our Blessed Mother, Mary, and other wonderful female saints and martyrs, but also the female by the acceptance of the call of women to be ordained. Moreover, we permit gay men and lesbian women to also find their place in Holy Orders, believing that God's created order is perfect and not defective; that is, they are welcomed just as they are, no changes required. Finally, also just like you, we honor the Holy Father, as the bishop of Rome, and respect his opinion and discernment, but we operate similar to our Catholic Orthodox brothers and sisters through a Patriarchy. Therefore, His Beatitude, ++Richard, is the head of our worldwide church. And, we remind you that there is always room at our table for you, but sadly not for us at your's, hence why you call us elicit.

I am glad that we have had this chance to set the record straight for everyone. I am hopeful that we can now move forward and do our jobs: serving those in need. And, perhaps now you will agree, too, that no one in the public was deceived...except perhaps only you for not seeking additional information.

Your Brother Christ and Service,  
(The Rev.) Father Jim St. George, Pastor Saint Miriam

St. Miriam, A Parish Community  
Manayunk/Roxborough, Philadelphia, PA 19128  
On the corner of Shurs Lane and Freeland Avenue  
Telephone (215) 701-4781  
www.mysaintmiriam.org