

PETER BORRÉ AND THE CLOSING OF PARISHES

When the archdiocese of Boston began to close parishes in order to meet the financial obligations incurred by settlements with survivors of priestly sexual abuse, many parishioners were outraged and tried to block the process by engaging in sit-ins and sleep-ins. Observing this development, Peter Borré, a retired international oil company executive, began to wonder why some apparently viable parishes were being suppressed and whether the archdiocese was merely trying to seize their assets to satisfy its mounting debts. Realizing the importance of joint action, he organized the Council of Parishes and made it his business to find out what rights parishioners had under canon law. Raised and educated in Rome, he quickly familiarized himself with Vatican procedures and with the assistance of canon lawyers presented the case for preventing the arbitrary closing of parishes. He is featured prominently in Jason Berry's book, *Render unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church*. This is a must-read for everyone concerned about church finances and the profits gained by closing parishes.

On Thursday September 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk, Peter Borré will inaugurate VOTF's fall program, "Whither Our Parishes?" described in the accompanying article. He will discuss the rights of parishes and the legal procedures required to defend their continued existence.