

Dear Bishop Barber,

St. Rose of Lima Parish has been the cornerstone of my life and my family's life for many years. I was married within its sacred walls, celebrated the baptisms of my children, and laid my beloved parents and grandparents to rest through its comforting services. For many in our community, it is not just a church, but a second home where we have celebrated countless milestones and where we find solace and hope in times of need.

The recent decision by the Diocese of Oakland to close St. Rose of Lima Parish is deeply distressing. It has served as a spiritual sanctuary and cornerstone of community life in our area. The parish is more than just a place of worship; it is a vibrant hub for community activities, support groups, and a gathering place that strengthens communal bonds across generations.

Closing this beloved parish would result in significant cultural and social loss for its members and the surrounding community. According to studies, churches are known to contribute to social cohesion and community well-being. St. Rose of Lima Parish, with its rich history and active engagement in community service, plays an essential role in promoting these values.

It will not be easy for our parishioners to attend other churches as you seem to think it will. There is no public transportation for those that don't drive in town, there is no Sunday bus service at all. If they take public transportation, for the 5 pm Vigil Mass at St. Patrick in Rodeo, they will have to catch the bus at 4:30 pm and walk the last three blocks to the church. Then wait until 6 pm to catch a return bus, if they miss then wait until 7 pm. Martinez is not an option since no transit runs that way

Instead of closing this vibrant parish, we urge the Diocese to consider alternative solutions. Perhaps reducing operating costs, seeking additional funding through parish programs, or collaborating with other nearby parishes could be viable options. This would ensure that the community continues to benefit from the invaluable social, spiritual, and cultural contributions of St. Rose of Lima Parish.

Joseph L Surges

St. Rose of Lima/St. Patrick's Mission