NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

# Archdiocese upset by St. Patrick's new home

Rohan Mascarenhas Matt Friedman David Giambusso The Star-Ledger | Jan. 26, 2011

**SOUTH ORANGE, N.J.** -- And now, let us raise a toast to St. Patrick.

Once a cherished icon for generations of Catholics, a statue of Ireland?s patron saint from Sacred Heart Church in Newark has landed in a South Orange restaurant?much to the chagrin of local Catholic leaders.

On a recent night, as college-age students mingled at Cryan?s Beef and Ale House, St. Patrick watched silently from a corner in the restaurant section, a shepherd?s staff in his left hand.

The move, from pious to pub, has provoked some debate. The 6-foot-tall plaster statue was relocated after the Archdiocese of Newark closed the venerable church last summer.

Bar owner Jimmy Cryan said his family had long supported Sacred Heart, holding fundraisers at the bar and pitching in for restorations.

?The response has been overwhelming,? he said. ?It?s just nice to have a piece of old Sacred Heart around.?

But archdiocese officials, who plan to reuse items from the church in other religious buildings, are not pleased.

?The (Cryan) family expressed some interest in the statue because they had been involved in its restoration,? said archdiocesan spokesman Jim Goodness. ?They asked if they could have it. Our expectation was that it would be in a house, or a place for appropriate veneration.?

Generations of local Catholics flocked to Sacred Heart in the heavily Irish Vailsburg neighborhood to pay their respects to the icon.

?It was gorgeous,? said Paul Reilly, a former parishioner. ?The St. Patrick?s parade in Newark had their Mass there every year, and they used to bring the statue out. The place would be packed.?

Citing falling attendance, the archdiocese shuttered the church in June, despite bitter protests from longtime worshippers.

Bob Madara, who joined the church in the 1970s, said he enjoyed having St. Patrick preside over his meals.

?It?s in a respectable place,? he said. ?It?s great. When people saw it on Christmas, it was one bright spot (after the church closed). It?s a morale booster.?

**Source URL (retrieved on *11/30/2015 - 21:25*):** http://ncronline.org/news/archdiocese-upset-st-patricks-new-home