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# A Reminder of Things Lost

Suzanne Morse | Feb. 1, 2011 NCR Today

St. Jeremiah?s in Framingham, Massachusetts is one of the five remaining vigiling parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston. St. Jeremiah?s went into vigil in the spring of 2005 ? I was there at the last official Mass, with the group of parishioners who decided that in order to stay at the parish they loved, they would have to save it by remaining in the church 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The last several weeks have brought discouraging news for these vigiling parishes, and parishioners at other closed churches. As reported by The Boston Globe [1] a few weeks ago, Pope Benedict XVI has rejected the appeal to reopen their churches.

I am reminded of St. Jeremiah?s situation, though, because of a different anniversary. Twenty-five years ago last week, New Hampshire teacher Christa McAuliffe died aboard the space shuttle Challenger, an accident that claimed the lives of six other members of the crew. I am of the generation for whom the Challenger accident was a defining moment of our young lives. That bitterly cold day, I was a seventh grader in the midst of reading ?The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere? when the principal came into our English class and whispered something to our teacher. We finished reading the poem and then she informed us that the Challenger, with the Teacher in Space, had exploded.

Christa McAuliffe both received her Confirmation and was married at St. Jeremiah?s. According to the church?s Web site [2], ?The last visit she made to St. Jeremiah's was to be Godmother at the baptism of one of her nieces right before she entered the training program for the Challenger mission.? There are bells at the parish that ring in her memory, there in part because of people from all over the world donated funds so that there would be a reminder of her presence there.

That is what is lost when a parish is closed. Rest in peace, Christa McAuliffe.

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**Links:**
[1] http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/01/06/ex_parishioners_still_hope_to_reverse_church_cl
[2] http://www.stjeremiah.org/christa.htm