



July 31, 2023

Most Reverend Bishop Robert Gruss  
Bishop of Saginaw  
Diocese of Saginaw  
5600 Weiss Street  
Saginaw, MI 48603-2762

Deacon Rick Warner  
Director Parish Life  
St. Mary Catholic Church/Nativity of the Lord Parish  
220 West Downie Street  
Alma, MI 48801

Dear Bishop Gruss, Deacon Warner, and Parishioners:

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) has learned that leaders of the Saginaw Diocese and Nativity of the Lord Parish who are overseeing the future of the former St. Mary Catholic Church in Alma are once again proposing demolition of this iconic building. The MHPN is writing to ask that another look be taken to preserve it, an idea supported by many both in Alma and around the state.

The MHPN is the statewide preservation organization that advocates for Michigan's historic places that contribute to the state's economic vitality, its sense of place, and our connection to the past. While we advocate for historic properties of all age  
"That can't possibly be historic. I remember when it was built!"

We would like people to recognize the important design tradition of which St. Mary is a part. Michigan is a global player in Modernism. The state established its prominence because of the cutting-edge design work of the auto industry, the educational contributions of design programs such as Cranbrook, the architects being trained at such institutions as the University of Michigan, and the internationally-recognized designs of practicing architects such as Albert Kahn. Because of these powerful influences, evidence of very sophisticated Modernism is found all around our state, in big cities and small.

St. Mary is one of these highly sophisticated buildings. It was beautifully conceived by William Wesley Peters of Taliesin Associated Architects of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, with the first mass celebrated in 1969. The church was striking for the

who does not see its spires among the treetops. Those who venture closer are stunned that