

DAILY NEWS

CHURCH: CANDYMAN CAN'T He's facing eviction in sale of bldg.

BY LORE CROGHAN

Friday, May 14th 2004, 7:12AM

A Bronx church is telling the tenant of a building it owns near Ground Zero, "No dough - so it's time to go."

St. Peter's Church is moving to evict Alan Silver from 88 Chambers St. Their dispute dates back to the dark days after Sept. 11, when his store Candy World sat behind soldiers' barricades for a month.

The conflict was never resolved - so Silver hasn't paid rent in almost two years.

He's one of hundreds of downtown business owners still struggling after the 2001 terrorist attacks. A group he belongs to, called From the Ground Up, has seen nearly 200 member businesses shut down in his neighborhood.

The church is selling the small five-story building where Candy World is located to developer Joseph Sabbagh for \$2.5 million, and wants Silver out. He says he's entitled to first dibs on the property, and could get funding to buy it if given the chance.

Both sides feel mistreated. Silver thinks his landlord - a church - should show some compassion.

"I don't really understand the unfairness of this," he said. "After 9/11, churches from all over the country came down here to help."

St. Peter's lawyer thinks Silver is impeding church efforts to raise much-needed funds.

"If he were a decent man, he wouldn't put the church through this," said attorney Gerald Ross.

But beyond the angry accusations, there appear to be no villains here - just people who are anxious because money's tight.

Silver's got a wife and three small children to support. He doesn't know how he'll make it if he gets tossed off Chambers, where he's worked for 30 years.

St. Peter's is a working-class parish whose rector, the Rev. Marsha Bacon Glover, is a corporate lawyer turned Episcopal priest. The lower Manhattan property was deeded to it in 1811, to serve as a source of income.

The two sides went to a mediator a couple years ago, but to no avail. Silver said the last time he sent the church a rent check, it was returned - so he stopped trying.

When he set out to learn the candy business after losing a garment industry job, he weighed 160 pounds. In six months, he'd taste-tested his way to 220.

In the quiet shop where he cooks up treats in big chocolate vats and a nut-roasting machine, he recalled crowds that lined up at lunch - before Sept. 11. Many customers worked at the World Trade Center.

Silver went to city court yesterday with lawyer Adam Leitman Bailey to ask that the eviction case be dismissed. The candyman looked up and noticed another member of From the Ground Up on a bench in

front of him. Her landlord is trying to evict her, too.



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St. Peter's Church in the Bronx has been battling Candy World owner Alan Silver since 2001 terrorist attacks.



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