



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT

July 9, 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I write to you with the very important news that this fall, the St. John School community will welcome the families of Sacred Heart School and St. Stephen-St. Edward School as you merge into one entity on your campus in Goshen. Bringing these three amazing school communities together under one roof will secure the future of Catholic education in this region, delivering the academically superior education experience of which we are all so proud.

Saint John School is one of 23 of our treasured Catholic schools that have been devastated in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis - 20 of which will not reopen at all. These schools have fallen victim to the financial fall-out of the coronavirus which has resulted in the inability of many families to pay this year's tuition, let alone be able to plan ahead and confidently re-register for the 2020-2021 school year. Those factors, combined with months of unopened churches have seen a loss of parish funds which traditionally help support the schools, have made this merger the only viable path forward.

I know this is very difficult news to hear because you are well familiar with our many years of academic achievement and dedication to our children. The COVID-19 global pandemic has taken hundreds of thousands of lives, rendered many more hundreds of thousands of survivors physically vulnerable and left all of their families to pick up the pieces. As you know, the extended family of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York has not been immune to this crisis. We continue to mourn the loss of loved ones and pray for those still moving along the long road of recovery from this insidious virus.

In addition, the financial implications have been devastating. In the blink of an eye, many families have fallen into financial insecurity and uncertainty. Our Church has suffered as well. Closed doors and cancelled public masses have resulted in an unprecedented financial loss that will have far-reaching implications on many of her parishes, services and ministries - including the ability to invest in our schools - for years to come.

This is a troubling day for everyone in our Catholic school community, and we regret the unconventional timing and method of delivering this news. The reality of so many schools being lost is personally painful, and it was only accepted after a detailed study was conducted of their respective fiscal standing and projected enrollment numbers in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. None of us could have imagined the grave impact this pandemic would have on our schools.

As we process this news, we must resolve that the great tradition of Catholic education in New York *will* continue. It may look a bit different with fewer buildings, but it will continue. We do too much good and provide such an exceptional academic experience that we *owe it* to society to carry on. Now, more than ever, the world needs the future leaders our schools produce.

Let me assure you that the children of all the affected schools will be able to continue receiving a quality Catholic education. We will ensure a seat for every child at a Catholic school. Directors of Enrollment will be assigned to those families to help identify an appropriate school for their children to enroll in for the 2020-2021 year. I know that when these families enroll at St. John School, they will be welcomed with compassion, encouragement and good cheer as they continue their Catholic education journey in a new home.

Additional information and updates, including the contact information for your Director of Enrollment, can be found at <https://catholicschoolsny.org/announcements>.

As our shepherd Timothy Cardinal Dolan is always quick to remind us, Jesus is always with us. He's either behind us, pushing us forward, ahead of us imploring us to join Him or right by our side, holding us up with every step. We must embrace this aspect of our faith and move forward, determined to succeed.

I send my love and prayers to all of you, and the principals, teachers and staff of *all* our Catholic schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Deegan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York