

New Regional School Proposed for 2008-2009 School Year

The following letter from the C.A.R.E. Steering Committee was sent to all parishioners and school families in each parish on November 2, 2007.

November 2, 2007

Dear Parishioners and School Families,

I am writing to you regarding the decision by the Steering Committee of Area II of the St. Margaret Mary Deanery concerning the future of our parish school. The committee is comprised of the pastors and principals of the four parishes, namely, Assumption, St. Ann, St. Margaret Mary and St. Therese Little Flower. St. Margaret Mary closed its school in June 2006.

The committee will recommend to the Archdiocesan Education Commission and to Archbishop Pilarczyk that our three remaining schools be closed in June 2008, and in their place an entirely new entity with a new name be established for the school year, 2008-2009. This joint effort is a positive step to ensure the continuation of a quality Catholic elementary school education. This is not an end, but a new beginning, with a great promise for additional opportunities in expanding curriculum for a larger student population. There will be one campus at the former St. Ann school site. It was determined to be the most logical site, as it is the most centrally located, the newest and being a one-floor building, having the capability of handicap accessibility. It will be an entirely new institution with a new name. All four parishes will be equally represented on a new Education Commission.

This has not been an easy or quick decision. The Committee has met for over two years and has experienced the same grief and loss that you will also experience. At the same time, we find great hope and excitement about the future of Catholic elementary education in our region. It is our conclusion that our parishes can no longer independently provide financially for our individual schools. This move to regional schools is happening in our area, with other parishes in our deanery, the Archdiocese and throughout the country. I believe that we will remain a strong and viable parish as we move forward, providing a positive new way by which Catholic education can be provided to our children while passing on our Catholic heritage.

While our school has continued to offer a quality Catholic education program beneficial to our children and to our parish, we have seen a decrease in the number of students over the past several years. The projected enrollment data does not indicate a reversal in this pattern. The increased cost per student, the increased costs for required benefits to employees and the increasing costs of utilities have strained our parish financial resources. It is only through your increased parish support that we have been able to meet payroll and to honor contracts with our school faculty and staff these past years. These funds will not be enough to offset costs for much longer.

This recommendation will be presented at the end of this month to the Cincinnati Area Commission on Education and in turn to Archbishop Pilarczyk for final approval. On Friday, November 2, our faculties and staffs were informed of this decision. In addition to parish announcements the weekend of November 3-4, we will meet with our students at school on Monday, November 5. An informational meeting for all parish and school families of our region is planned for Monday, November 12, at 7:00 PM, at St. Ann Church.

Many details and other planning for this transition remains to be realized. In the coming weeks and months, we will continue to provide information to our parish and school families in as timely a manner as possible via the C.A.R.E. news and other school/parish communications. We are counting on your input and support in the next few months as we complete a process which will give us a new spirit and unity. There is much work to be done.

Please keep in your prayers our parish and school families, our school's faculty and staff and all who are involved in the continued planning for the present change and the future planning that will be taking place. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the gift of wisdom, we continue the mission of the Church and our parish community as we bring Christ to our lives, His Light to our world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Robert W. Goebel
Pastor

Ms. Linda Westendorf
Principal, St. Therese Little Flower

Rev. William M. Kennedy
Pastor, Assumption

Mr. William Walborn
Principal, Assumption

Rev. Thomas J. Dennemann
Pastor, St. Ann

Ms. Marianne Rosemond
Principal, St. Ann

Rev. Jerome J. Gardner
Pastor, St. Margaret Mary

Mrs. Patricia Kennedy
Former Principal, St. Margaret Mary