



## Saint Raymond of Penafort Church & School

### Statement Regarding Blue Ribbon Commission Report – January 6, 2012

Archbishop Chaput wrote a December 8<sup>th</sup> Pastoral Letter describing efforts to “renew our local Church with Christian charity, justice and zeal.” The challenges, he wrote, would be painful. But through the power of God’s love for us, we will find the strength to meet these challenges and fulfill God’s mission for our local Church. Among these challenges is the need to restructure and revitalize Catholic Education in the Archdiocese. As the Archbishop noted, any plan would likely involve the closing or merging of a number of our schools. Today, the results of the yearlong Blue Ribbon Commission study of Catholic education in the Archdiocese were announced and the Archbishop accepted its recommendations. Although **our parish school will not be directly affected by these plans**, it is important that we understand the difficult process that some of our friends, neighbors and family members in other parishes are experiencing as we move forward. A website dedicated to providing the latest information about the transition plan – [www.FaithintheFuture.com](http://www.FaithintheFuture.com) – will be continually updated. Thank you for your commitment to Catholic education. Please join us in praying for all school families, administrators, teachers, and staff.

Things to keep in mind as we reflect on this monumental decision:

- In the past 10 years the Archdiocese has provided over \$750 million to parish and regional elementary schools in subsidy. The difference between tuition and actual cost per pupil increased (on average) from \$950 in 2001 to \$1475 today.
- Church attendance has declined in many parishes. This impacts the parish’s ability to subsidize a parish school. In addition, the number of children being baptized has decreased significantly in the past 10 years (at some parishes more than 40%).

A summary of schools that are impacted:

- Bucks County:
  - St. Michael, Levittown and Our Lady of Grace combine at Pennel
  - St Mark, Bristol and St Ephrem combine at Bensalem
  - Assumption, Feasterville and St Bede combine at Holland
  - Holy Trinity, Morrisville and St John combine at Lower Makefield
  - St John, Ottsville and St Isidore combined at Quakertown
  - Conwell-Egan HS is closed
- Chester County:
  - St. Monica, Berwyn and St Patrick combine at Malvern
  - St Patrick, Kennett and St. Cornelius combine at Chadds Ford
- Delaware County:
  - Annunciation, Brookline and St. Denis combine at Havertown
  - St Cyril, Lansdowne and St Andrew combine at Drexel Hill
  - Our Lady of Fatima, Secane and O.L. Perpetual Help combine at Morton
  - St. Gabriel, Norwood and St. Madeline/St. Rose combine at Ridley Park
  - St. John, Wallingford and Nativity BVM combine at Media
  - St. Francis, Lenni and St. Thomas combine at Glen Mills
  - Holy Savior and St. Joseph combine at Aston
  - Msgr. Bonner/Archbishop Prendergast is closed
- Montgomery County:
  - St. Anthony, Ambler, St. Catherine, Horsham and St. Alphonsus combine at Maple Glen
  - Conshohocken Catholic and Mother of Divine Providence combine at King of Prussia
  - St. Theresa, Norristown and Visitation combine at Trooper
  - Our Lady of Victory, St. Titus and Epiphany combine at Plymouth Meeting
  - Our Lady Help of Christians, Abington and St. David combine at Willow Grove
  - Immaculate Conception, Jenkintown and St. Luke combine at Glenside
  - St. Rose of Lima, North Wales and St. Stanislaus combine at Lansdale
  - St. Maria Goretti, Hatfield and Corpus Christi and Lansdale

- Sacred Heart, Royersford and St. Eleanor at Collegeville
- St. Philip Neri, East Greenville and St Isidore at Quakertown
- Philadelphia NORTH
  - John Paul II, Bridesburg and St. Timothy combined at Levick Street
  - St. George and Our Lady of Port Richmond combined at Thompson Street
  - Holy Cross and Mother of Consolation combined at Chestnut Hill
  - St. Bridget and Holy Child combined at Hermitage Street
  - Incarnation and St. Helena combined at 5<sup>th</sup> & Godfrey
  - Our Lady of Consolation and St. Matthew combined at Cottman Ave.
  - Our Lady of Ransom and Resurrection combined at Castor Ave.
  - St. William and St. Cecilia combined at Rhawn Street
  - St. Hubert High School is closed
- Philadelphia SOUTH
  - Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and St. Donato combined at 65<sup>th</sup> Street
  - St. Laurentius and St. Peter combined at 5<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Annunciation and St. Nicholas combined at Pierce Street
  - St. Gabriel and St. Thomas combined at Morris Street
  - St. Malachy and Visitation combined at Lehigh Avenue
  - Ephiphany, Holy Spirit, St Richard, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and Sacred Heart combined at former Stella Maris
  - Our Lady of Lourdes is closed
  - West Catholic High School is closed

The teachers, principals and staff of the schools impacted:

- High School Level: all positions are eliminated with the closure of the schools; HS union contracts allow for teachers with seniority to “bump” other teachers with less seniority in schools that remain open across the Archdiocese
- Elementary School Level: all positions are eliminated with the closure of the schools; the “new school” that is created at the site of one of the former schools will hire new faculty (with former faculty being given some preference in the process); the Archdiocese will assist the pastors of sponsoring parishes in selecting the new Principal (the school will have a new name)

The impact of the Blue Ribbon Report Recommendations at Saint Raymond Church & School:

- **Academic Excellence:** we will continue to implement the Core Curriculum and seek to integrate what is necessary for our becoming a “Model School”
- **Religious Education:** we will seek to strengthen our Parish Religious Education for children attending non-Catholic Schools so that they receive adequate formation in the faith; we will transition to students receiving Confirmation in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- **The Foundation for Education:** we will seek support from the newly created Foundation which will provide a variety of funding opportunities for teacher scholarships, technology improvements and physical plant improvements
- **Advocacy for Governmental Support:** we will advocate along with other school communities for increased funding from the State and Federal Government (ie – “vouchers”)

In closing, we remain grateful for the opportunity to work with young people in our Parish School, Religious Education Program and Youth Ministry Programs. At the request of Jesus, we want to continue to bring children to Him so that their lives, and the lives of their families, may be enriched by the Father’s love and mercy. May we continue to strive to be a community where God is glorified and His people sanctified!

Father Christopher M. Walsh  
Pastor

Mrs. Patricia Wright  
Principal

Sister Gail Osborn, RSM  
Director of Religious Education