

## The Facts behind a Decision

Parishioners may be aware that years ago three funds had been established in regards to the financials of the school. A "School Endowment Fund" was established for the maintenance of the physical school building. A "Fr. Engel Fund" was established for assistance to students in Catholic School at the discretion of the pastor. And later after the closure of Sacred Heart School in 2007 a "School Investment Fund" was created to invest any rental income from the school building that exceeded expenses. When the school was closed Fr. John Detisch established a scholarship/grant program intended to soften the blow of losing the school as students were forced to transfer to other Catholic schools. In recent years we used the projected gains of all three of these funds in addition to the rental income to determine a budget for the grant program. Although the principle of these funds has not been touched and still exists, even in a good market year they do not generate enough income to cover the Catholic Education assessment or the maintenance expenses of the school. So it was primarily the rent that allowed the grant program to exist.

As anticipated, without a renter for the school building our parish is unable to continue the scholarship grant program. After review with the finance council I have sent a letter to the currently participating grant families informing them that the grant program would be discontinued at the end of the current school year.

We can be proud of what the parish has done in providing \$1.2 million dollars of tuition assistance to families in the 11 years of the program. This money was directly assisting parishioners and was in addition to the annual assessments for Catholic Education paid to the Diocese.

The Catholic Education Assessment has always incrementally increased over the years. This current year we are assessed \$49,077 and this amount will likely increase substantially in the future as we had been assessed less as we had been receiving some credit for the scholarship program. Also without a renter in the school building we are responsible for the utilities, security monitoring, garbage collection, and full cost of plowing services, so instead of receiving roughly \$150k of rent income we are now seeing \$30-40k of facility expenses.

The Catholic Church has always held that parents are the primary teachers of the faith, and the Church acknowledges her responsibility to assist parents in their role as teachers of the faith to their children. My hope for the future is to have a faith formation program that does just that, enable and enhance the role of the family in living and growing in the faith.

If there are questions, please feel free to contact me: [rev.markohern@gmail.com](mailto:rev.markohern@gmail.com) or 456-6256

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