

## PLEASE READ ME – IMPORTANT INFO

February 27, 2009

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Guardians,

We are beginning preparations for the next school year at St. Ann. These preparations come at a time unlike any most of us have ever faced in terms of the global financial system, and they are reflected in the financial status of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and St. Ann parish. The Archdiocese is no longer in a position to ‘bail out parishes’ should shortfalls occur. Though the parish will continue to subsidize the school, it can no longer afford the ‘deficit spending’ that the generosity of many parishioners has afforded us over the years. Prudent stewardship during these times demands that we live within a balanced budget for this year and the years to come. Like all of you, this is the time to live within our means. Operating from a balanced budget will allow our school to be faithful to our mission of education and passing on the faith.

What does this mean for St. Ann School? First, it means that there is a complete pay freeze for every employee of the parish and the archdiocese for next year. (Priests and teachers included.) Second, though we have been able to hold tuition increases to 2% for the past 6 years, we have done so at the expense of going into deficit spending. Though God has been good in unexpected ways in providing for the parish, the Archdiocese will not allow us to budget “God’s providence” as a line item. Thus, everyone’s tuition will increase by 5%, which amounts to a \$3-\$8 a week increase depending on the number of children you have in our school. Third, to maintain the high level of our educational programs and achieve a balanced budget, parents are required to fundraise an additional \$400 per family to make our budget work. \* (Unlike the tuition revenues we receive, this \$400 can be tax deductible, depending on how it is raised.) Thus, the total difference (both tuition and fundraising) from last year to this year ranges from \$12-\$15 per week per family. Though I know this is a sacrifice for many, I believe that the quality of education we provide is worth it.

That being said, I am not leaving you without assistance to make up for this sudden increase for the coming year. I am making a direct appeal to the alumni of St. Ann School as well as the parishioners for “tuition assistance money”. Though I cannot tell you how much will be available for families in need, I have already received \$1,500 in pledges from three families since my bulletin column ran two days ago. My hope is to *fundraise* enough to keep the average *change in costs to parents in the \$7-\$10* a week range.

What is **crucial** to us is to have **an accurate count of our enrollment**. If you are in a position to pay your registration, book and SACPO fees, then proceed as normal. If the year’s fiscal hard times have affected your ability to come up with **all** the registration monies at the moment, but you still intend to enroll, PLEASE LET US KNOW THAT. Our parish bookkeeper, Eileen Engelmeyer, will work with you to set up a realistic payment plan. But what I need from every family is **a commitment about** your child(ren)’s **enrollment** for next year and payment or a payment plan in place for registration fees **by March 30**. We will be offering teacher contracts based on realistic enrollment numbers.

Thank you for your understanding. Know of my continued commitment to keep St. Ann School a place where ‘children are valued and values are taught’ for many years to come.

Fr. Bill

\*This is over and above our current fundraisers – eg: Candy sales, auction raffle sales, etc. \$400 is based on either maintaining our current levels of families and students or with up to a 10% decrease in families and students. If enrollment numbers increase significantly, then this number decreases significantly...