

# ST. MARY'S PARISH SCHOOL

March 10, 2018

To the Members of the St. Mary's Parish Community,

More than 100 years ago, through the efforts of Father George Fitzgerald and many others the first class graduated from St. Mary's High School. After much prayer and consultation, I now have the unfortunate duty of announcing that the class of 2018 will be the last class to graduate from St. Mary's. St. Mary's High School will close at the end of this school year.

St. Mary's Elementary School will not be affected in any way by this action. It is not closing or merging! It is my expectation and that of our school administration that the elementary school will continue to be a model of a successful Catholic school. The elementary school is vibrant and the early childhood program is experiencing consistent growth.

In this situation it would be easy to point fingers and to try to assign blame but the sad reality is that our high school has fallen victim to a confluence of demographic and financial trends that make it impossible for us to go forward. Every school system, both parochial and public, is wrestling with a steep decline in the number of children. The Catholic Church has been struggling to find an answer to the fact that young families are not coming to church and many young parents find their faith irrelevant. On a local basis, we are competing with high quality public schools and a growing number of private and charter schools. At the same time that these factors have been limiting our pool of potential students our costs have been spiraling upward.

The effects of all of this has been to shrink our student body. We currently have less than 90 students and only 9 children enrolled for our upcoming freshman class. While we have prided ourselves on small classes and individual attention we have now reached the levels that the quality of our educational environment has to be questioned.

Bishop Rozanski, diocesan officials, and various boards in this parish have discussed and explored, at length, any possible alternatives to this action but have found none that can change the long-term trends.

I know that this news will impact a great number of parishioners who have supported our High School for a long time. I am personally devastated by this decision and all I can say is I am sorry. The St. Mary's community will always be grateful to our friends and alumni who have supported this school for many years. The spirit and the success of St. Mary's High School will continue on and we can all cherish the gifts and memories that the school has provided for over 100 years.

God Bless You All.

Fr. Frank

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