



## Catholic Math

Some weeks ago, under the heading “Catholic Education Affordability,” I mentioned that presently, our Archdiocesan schools are running at a deficit of approximately \$9 million a year. I also mentioned that less than 10,000 students attend our Catholic schools, and added that “this effectively means each student attending an Archdiocesan school is automatically receiving \$9,000 in tuition assistance.” Amazingly, I only received three comments on that statement. One from our Deacon Bill Garrett, one from Archdiocesan CFO Brad Wil-

son, and one from Msgr. Joe Corbett. I take this to mean that only three people read the article, or as Msgr. Corbett said, “Call it Catholic Math.” Whatever you call it, my calculation was off by one zero. Ah yes, what a difference a zero can make. In this case, the correct math and statement is each student attending Archdiocesan schools is automatically receiving \$900 in tuition assistance, NOT \$9,000. (Yes, Catholic Math.) The rest of the information in the article is accurate.

Together with this \$900 assistance, the schools offer a fur-

ther subsidy. For example, each student at St. Jude and St. Pius receives a \$1,500 subsidy. At Christ the King, that amount is \$2,900. I mentioned previously that the schools’ shortfall is alleviated by the Archdiocese placing a school assessment (or tax if you wish) on the parishes. The 2016 assessments for All Saints are...

School Assessment	\$263,279
Parish Assessment	\$354,599
Arch. Annual Appeal	\$199,500
Georgia Bulletin	<u>\$27,580</u>
Total Assessment	\$844,958

## Parish Verification

Each year I am asked to sign a number of parish verification forms for families who wish to enroll their children in Catholic schools. In each case, I ask myself two questions: First, does this family come to Mass regularly?; and second, does this family support our parish in the best way they are able? I can only base my answers on Mass attendance through the use of offertory envelopes and financial contributions.

Why is parish verification a big deal? Why not just sign all forms as long as a family is registered at All Saints? If you have read my past writings on Catholic schools, you know I am an ardent supporter of Catholic education. Nothing would give me greater joy than to sign all application forms presented to me and have every family wishing to enroll their children in Catholic schools be afforded that opportunity. However, until there are sufficient slots to meet the demand of students applying, I owe it in fairness and honesty to follow the requirements of the Archdiocese to the best of my ability.

Knowing that each student is

going to receive a subsidy of at least \$2,400 (\$1,500+900), it is important parents strive to meet that minimum contribution to the parish, or the Archdiocesan regulation of a sincere effort of 5% of income.

I have brought this to the attention of the Parish Council and they have recommended all families, and especially those who intend to apply children to Catholic schools, reflect on these questions:

- Do you and your family attend Mass regularly?
- Do your contributions to the parish approximate 5% of your income? If not, are there extenuating circumstances (e.g., loss of job, family illness, etc.)
- Are your parish contributions active in the form of weekly or monthly envelopes, or automatic bank deductions?
- Do your contributions to the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal approximate 1% of your income?
- Are you actively involved in parish activities and ministries?

The Parish Council agrees having to sign parish verification forms puts the pastor in an unfair situation. They recognize a pastor-signed form puts all students on a level playing field to get in, regardless of whether or not the family tithes or at the very least, meets the subsidy contribution the parish provides. Signing the form is a matter of fairness toward the families who do support the parish. It’s not easy to say no to signing a form, but in life, doing what is just and right sometimes obliges us to travel the more difficult and unpopular road.

The decision to adhere to Archdiocesan regulations, I know, will be unpopular with some. I understand parents’ concerns to provide education in our faith. To meet that need, I have striven to offer a vibrant and enriching young people’s program, as well as ongoing faith formation opportunities for parents here at All Saints. I am grateful to our staff for making this happen and encourage everyone to take advantage of all available opportunities.