

St. Joseph School energized about returning to parish-run school

Faith community embraces Diocese of Rochester's decision and looks forward to a successful Catholic Schools Week

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Penfield, N.Y., Jan. 27, 2010 – With registration for Catholic Schools in Monroe County slated to begin next week, St. Joseph School plans a celebratory Mass on Sunday, Jan. 31 at 11 a.m. at St. Joseph's Church, 43 Gebhardt Road, that will include students in full dress uniforms with their families. The Mass will be followed by a gathering in the gymnasium that will include an opportunity to talk with Sister Christina Marie Luczynski, principal of St. Joseph School for the past nine years, and other St. Joseph families while enjoying coffee, juice and pastries.

The Mass kicks off Catholic Schools Week the first week of February, which includes a weeklong Book Fair, tours on Wednesday, an Open House on Thursday and the opportunity to pick up registration packets. These packets also can be found at any Catholic schools throughout the Diocese.

“Catholic Schools Week is a wonderful way to celebrate the great gift our faith in God, education and for each other is at St. Joseph School and other Catholic schools,” Luczynski said. “Walk through our halls and you'll experience the enthusiasm and energy and joy for learning.”

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This Catholic Schools Week is unique in a way for many at St. Joseph School following the Diocese of Rochester's recent announcement to relinquish the financial obligations of operating the school. In a paradigm shift that harkens back to the early 1990s, St. Joseph School will begin preparations for the upcoming 2010-11 academic year that include the opportunity to be a parish-run school. It will fund itself through tuition, the generosity of the congregation of St. Joseph Church, school parents, the surrounding community and a newly created foundation, PACE (Parents for the Advancement of Catholic Education), an organization with the mission of preserving and ensuring the future of Catholic education and whose role it is to develop fundraising ideas such as its "Nurturing Children with Heart Gala" and to network with alumni of Catholic schools.

"Having been in St. Joseph's parish for 40 years, with all eight of our children graduated from St. Joseph School, we are delighted with the news of the school's new opportunities and challenges going forward, to provide a sound grounding for students from the parish and from neighboring parishes that do not have a school," said Larry and Neen Oberlies of Penfield. "Ours is a 'teaching church' and that is exactly what St. Joseph School does in the early Christian formation fundamentals of life."

St. Joseph School is committed to improving upon the high quality of education that students have long enjoyed and benefited from. The school has been improving its technology over the past several years with the addition of 31 new Dell computers and Interactive Smartboards in several classrooms. The school also has Middle States Accreditation, N.Y. Certified teachers and dedicated aides who instill daily in students the importance of using knowledge to better not only themselves but also the community.

"The success of our school is due to the collaboration between teachers, administration and parents," said Debbie Waidl, president of the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) at St. Joseph School. "For the past nine years I have volunteered on SAC and it has been a privilege to work with Sister Christina, Fr. Jim Schwartz and all the wonderful parents who give their time and talent to make St. Joe's the school that it is.

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“Time and time again, parents have joined together to support St. Joe’s by fundraising to meet the needs of the school, from computers to capital improvements,” Waidl added. “St. Joseph School is one big family. The minute you walk into the building you know you have truly entered a special place.”

As St. Thomas Aquinas, the patron Saint of Catholic Education, wrote: “Wonder is the desire for knowledge.” Catholic school students consistently demonstrate the breathtaking wonder they experience in learning. With this as our inspiration, St. Joseph School will continue to provide students a pathway for academic excellence on their road to a lifetime of success.

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