

February 2, 2012

Dear Blessed Sacrament School Family,

As an academic institution, we are in the midst of long-needed radical changes to ensure a sustainable future for this very important ministry of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community. These changes are the result of a very extensive assessment and evaluation of our current structures and practices, guided by the nationally acclaimed school consulting firm, "Partners in Mission." Through this process, we endeavor to renew our commitment to provide a quality education at Blessed Sacrament School. To that end, we have begun a year-long venture to build on the current academic, spiritual, and social strengths of our school. This 76-year-old institution seeks to shape its future with a strong program promoting enrollment growth, philanthropic support, and continued commitment to faith-based education in a Catholic and Christian setting.



Initiatives have included the formation of a Strategic Planning Committee that is in the process of examining the strengths and opportunities that our school community can build upon to define its future. This committee, which began with 6 parents and myself, now numbers 60 committed people made up of administrators, teachers, alumni, parents, grandparents, parishioners and friends of Blessed Sacrament. Various sub-committees have formed to assess every aspect of our school and programming such as academics, spirituality, finances, athletics and technology, etc. We are committed to exploring areas where the school might improve, focus on strengths, confront challenges, and ultimately expand and develop programs for a future of service to Catholic and non-Catholic members of our community. In volatile economic times, we are also exploring any obstacles – educational, religious, social, or economic – that may impede a viable and sustainable future for this ministry.

As a result of this process, we are growing in our understanding of the radical nature of change to which we have been called. We are now well aware of national trends and appreciate the advice of Partners in Mission. We, as leadership of our school, are making decisions that will provide for a positive future. We are also aware that transitioning to a new and sustainable model will affect the financial ability of some families to continue their association with our school. After extensive analysis, we are certain that without these changes, our school would not have the future we desire. This brings all involved to a point of decision . . . we as an organization, and you as part of our school family. Our former practice of extending unbridled financial assistance in various forms of discount and scholarship was well intended; however, we have had the sobering realization that this model is unsustainable. This creates a challenge for us as our desire to help our community with needs will never change . . . therefore we encourage dialog and your engagement in this process as outlined in our registration information. With a limited amount of funds for financial assistance, we will continue to explore every way possible to minister to those in need. Our sadness is that we are not able to provide the same level of support that we did in the past. We are walking in faith and although some of these changes are difficult and challenging, I am confident that the Holy Spirit is hard at work to help us "fill in the blanks" that remain from our human limitations.

Another major change for the school is a change in leadership. I have appointed Mrs. Maria Gomez, our Assistant Principal, as Principal for the upcoming academic year. Mrs. Gomez is an active member of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community and has worked in Catholic education for thirty-three years after completing her undergraduate degree at Elon University. She is certified to teach middle and high school Science and Social Studies and taught for eight years in the Archdiocese of New York City before returning to North Carolina. Mrs. Gomez began teaching at our school in 1986 and was selected the

Alamance Teacher of the Year for Independent Schools in 1992 and was the recipient of the Msgr. Gerald Lewis Award for Outstanding Teacher of the Year for the Diocese of Raleigh in 2006. Mrs. Gomez received a Masters Degree in Administration and Supervision in 2006 from the University of Phoenix. Please join me in supporting Mrs. Gomez in her new role with the assurance that she will be given all available support to be successful in her partnership with us as Principal. We will use this time to assess this partnership for the future and we are confident that Mrs. Gomez will provide positive leadership to our school community.

We certainly do not know what the future holds, but we are confident "Who" holds the future. Many of you have heard me say over and over again that God is never outdone in generosity, but our response in faith needs to be equally as generous. It is through faith that we are able to navigate through these challenging times of change, but these are also times of great hope and promise. What will never change is our commitment to our children and our desire to transform lives!

Blessings to you and your families!

*Fr. Paul M. Gabriel, OFM Conv.*

Pastor