

# Our Faith Community News

On Friday January 24<sup>th</sup> we received the sad news that our School at St. Maria Goretti will be closing as of June. The timing of the announcement was very compressed in that the administrator and principal were informed at noon, the teachers at 3:00pm, the parents of students at 4:00pm and the media at 5:00pm. Since it happened on a Friday this meant that it did not make it possible to put any data in the bulletin in order to answer some of the questions that naturally arise from an announcement that most heard through the media without any explanatory info.

On pages 8 & 9 of this bulletin we have printed the letter from Fr. Kris Stubna, the president of the Board of Pittsburgh-East Regional Catholic Elementary Schools, which was sent to all the St. Maria Goretti School families, faculty and staff on Friday the 24<sup>th</sup>. One very important point not mentioned in Fr. Stubna's letter was the demographics of our area that have greatly impacted the enrollment at our school. The PA Department of Education reported that enrollment in Pittsburgh Public declined almost 1,200 students over the last five years and projects a loss of 1,500 more students over the next five years. We need more students to sustain our school and the statistics do not bode well for that happening.

I know that there were questions raised as to where the Diocese found the figure of \$800,000 of debt in the parish and the school. The financial statement that we shared with the parish this past fall only listed the debt of the school as \$25,000 as of June 30, 2019. That \$25,000 was the school debt as of that date but, between the parish and the school, there is a debt of nearly \$800,000. As of January 31<sup>st</sup> the school has an outstanding insurance debt for the medical and social security owed to the diocese for the teachers and staff of \$81,554. The parish has an insurance debt of \$157,336. The parish and school also have a carry-over debt of \$510,000 from the time the three parishes merged eight years ago. This school year the Diocese has already given our school the \$185,000 they generously pledged; and currently in the school account there is \$85,638. That sounds like a sizeable amount of money, but the payroll for teachers and staff each month is \$58,500 and this does not include utilities, insurance, etc. That means that there is only enough money in the school account for one and a half months of payroll and there are seven more months of salaries to be paid. Hopefully with tuition still coming in and fundraisers still being held there will be more money coming into the school, but the reality is that it will not be enough to cover the roughly \$350,000 needed to meet the payroll.

It is important to realize that the Pittsburgh East School Board as well as the Bishop and his consultants did not easily make the decision to announce the closing of our school as well as East Catholic School and the merger of four schools into two in the South Hills. The intention is to preserve Catholic School education in the East and the commitment is to make sure that all the children from our parish who wish to continue a Catholic School education will be able to find placement in a Catholic School in the Diocese – and there is plenty of classroom space in the schools in our area. Also we have been assured that the Diocese will do all they can to find employment in another Catholic School for our teachers, who wish to continue teaching in Catholic School. If you have other questions, please give me a call.

*Bro. John*

## **CHRIST LIFE – SHARING CHRIST**

The third series of the Christ Life Program called “Sharing Christ” will begin on Monday February 10 and run until March 21<sup>st</sup>. Come to enjoy refreshments, experience a dynamic teaching, and have an opportunity for some small group discussion about the meaning of Jesus Christ for you. This is hosted by St. Maria Goretti and Our Lady of the Angels Parishes and will be held at the St. Maria Goretti Social Hall from 6:30 p.m. until 8:45 p.m. You can register by email: [clpsmg@gmail.com](mailto:clpsmg@gmail.com) , online at: [www.olasmg.org/-8](http://www.olasmg.org/-8), by phone: 412-682-2354 or 412-682-0929