



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Communications • *The Long Island Catholic* • *Fe Fuerza Vida*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REVITALIZE THE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ON LONG ISLAND

To Partner with the Marianists on a Comprehensive Review and Action Plan in 2020

ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y., January 10, 2020 — The Diocese of Rockville Centre (DRVC) today announced the ***Morning Star Initiative***, a bold plan for the revitalization of Catholic elementary school education on Long Island.



Brother Thomas Cleary, S.M., Chief Revitalization Officer, Morning Star Initiative and President of Chaminade High School, Mineola with Bishop John Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre. At left is the Mary, Star of Evangelization icon - the "logo" for the new initiative. (DRVC Office of Communications/Gregory A. Shemitz photo).

In partnership with the Marianists, who operate two high schools, a middle school, and one elementary school on Long Island, the Diocese is undertaking a comprehensive review of the DRVC elementary schools in 2020, leading to an action plan to restore a robust Catholic culture, academic excellence and fiscally sustainable schools.

Bishop John Barres, Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, believes the initiative is critical to the strength and longevity of Catholic parishes, communities and education on Long Island since most Catholic elementary schools have struggled with enrollment, school building maintenance, and teacher salaries in recent years. Some schools have even been forced to close.

"The core of this initiative is to foster the educational and spiritual development of our students," Bishop Barres said. "We owe it to our parents, families, teachers, parishes, alumni and communities to provide a robust, evangelizing Catholic education for Long Island children.

"The Morning Star Initiative establishes four pillars to renew and transform Catholic education on Long Island," continued Bishop Barres.



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“A **Robustly Catholic Culture** centered on the spiritual, intellectual, sacramental, moral and liturgical life of the Church; **Safe and Supportive Communities** recognizing the dignity and potential of everyone; **Academic Excellence** built on a Catholic Faith-based model of individual growth and development; and that we are **Here to Stay** to meet the changing needs of the community, and to ensure sufficient resources for an improved educational environment and the financial stability of the schools.”

“The Marianists have two centuries of Catholic educational commitment and expertise,” said Bishop Barres. “With a reputation for academic excellence, they bring 90 years of experience running the Marianist schools on Long Island, including Chaminade High School, Kellenberg Memorial High School, the Brother Joseph C. Fox Latin School and St. Martin de Porres Marianist Elementary School. These schools have a combined enrollment of 4,500 students and have educated and formed in the Catholic Faith generations of young men and women, who provide outstanding leadership in our Church and communities.”

The Diocese has asked Brother Thomas Cleary, S.M., President of Chaminade High School, to serve as the Chief Revitalization Officer and to spearhead this effort. Brother Thomas will be assisted by his fellow Marianists. The comprehensive effort will seek feedback and ideas from the full spectrum of those with a stake in a revitalized Catholic elementary education – students, parents, teachers, administrators, priests, parish leaders, alumni and community supporters.

“As a religious order dedicated to providing faith-based education, we are committed to a strong and sustainable experience and one that promotes a powerful Catholic culture and identity,” said Brother Thomas. “In the coming year, the Marianists look forward to leading the Morning Star Initiative team on a full review of each Catholic elementary school and making thoughtful recommendations on how they will not only survive, but thrive, in the years ahead. We believe this is our mission.”

“Our founder, Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, believed one of the key characteristics of Marianist education is the openness to adaptation and change. This initiative is a great example of that philosophy,” Brother Thomas added. He will continue as President of Chaminade High School during the Morning Star Initiative process.

While the Marianists will spearhead the Morning Star Initiative, the Diocese will engage with an additional partner: Alvarez & Marsal, a global management consulting firm, whose education team is known for transforming educational organizations. In addition to this core team, the Tomorrow’s Hope Foundation will look to strengthen its support of DRVC schools and students throughout this initiative.



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The Morning Star Initiative will commence with stakeholder engagement during the first half of the year. It is expected that the review will be completed towards the end of 2020. The Diocese does not intend to close or consolidate any additional school for the Fall 2020 school year.

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