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Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Department of Catholic Schools  
3424 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

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March 26, 2021

Dear Parents of St. Ferdinand School Community,

We pray this letter finds you well this Lenten Season. As we begin to reopen after a year of distance learning, we are eager to welcome our students back to campus. It has been a difficult year for you and our school community, but it finally seems that our public health conditions are improving. This time has also lent itself to an extensive review and discernment of our school's ability to remain sustainable. It is for this reason we write to you today.

For the past several years, independent of tuition and local fundraising, the school has needed an average of \$225,000 annually to operate. The majority of this has surfaced in the last two years. With a number of public schools and 3 other Catholic elementary schools within a few miles of us, combined with significantly fewer school-aged children in the surrounding neighborhoods, our enrollment continues to decline at a very high rate.

A recent financial analysis projected the school would not be able to sustain itself past next year without significant outside investment of at least \$350,000- \$400,000 a year under the best circumstances. Moreover, the pandemic has further undermined the ability for the school to remain sustainable. Therefore, as pastor of St. Ferdinand parish and school, we have collaborated with school leadership, Archbishop Gomez, Auxiliary Bishop Aclan, and the Archdiocese Department of Catholic Schools to assess the current situation our school is facing. The consensus decision is that the TK-8 program at St. Ferdinand School cease operations at the end of the current school year. We remain hopeful that this is not a permanent state of our school, but the time has come to step back and reassess the viability of the school in this community. We thought it would be best to share now rather than open next year with the uncertainties.

The Archdiocese will work closely with each family enrolled at St. Ferdinand to ensure that all students can register at another Catholic school. Our closest Catholic school neighbor, Santa Rosa de Lima, is a half-mile away and we would like to encourage you to consider this option because of the many familiarities between the two schools. Those familiarities include present and past affiliation with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, many parishioners being active at both locations, as well as the principal at Santa Rosa de Lima who happens to be Ms. Alexandra Aceves, a former, well-known teacher at St. Ferdinand. More, there is room at Santa Rosa de Lima for each class at St. Ferdinand to stay and remain together if you so choose. Registration will be returned to families in good standing so it can be used at a neighboring Catholic School. Additionally, our goal is to work with you and your new school to support a tuition rate next year that is affordable. This includes working with the Catholic Education Foundation (CEF) and our neighboring Catholic Schools. The Archdiocese is also committed to work with our teachers and staff to assist with their employment at another Catholic school. Families and staff will be the priority.

This decision is not an easy one. It was made after careful discernment and after continued efforts to improve sustainability of the school over many years. We understand that this may be a difficult time of transition for our students, parents, and teachers. Staff from the Archdiocese Department of Catholic Schools are available to help facilitate the registration and process requests for financial assistance for families. All those in need of assistance are encouraged to speak with Assistant Superintendent Ryan Halverson at [RHalverson@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:RHalverson@la-archdiocese.org).

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the investment of finances, resources, and time made by all the past and present families of our faith community to St. Ferdinand School. The financial sacrifices made by our parents and the commitment of our school faculty and staff made it possible to provide our students with a Catholic education in a loving, faith filled environment. We are grateful for your sacrifices and investment in St. Ferdinand and reiterate the shared commitment of our parish and the Archdiocese to ensuring your children continue to receive a Catholic education for the coming school year.

May we all be guided by our faith as we put our hope and trust in the opportunities that lay ahead.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Juan Ayala, O.M.I.  
Pastor

Bishop Alex D. Aclan  
Auxiliary Bishop  
San Fernando Pastoral Region

Mr. Paul Escala  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools