

**St. Mary of the Assumption School to Close at the end of the current school year  
Catholic Schools Office to assist in transition for students and families**

**Braintree, MA** - This week, the pastor of St. Mary's of the Assumption Parish in Lawrence informed parents, teachers and staff that a difficult decision was reached to close St. Mary of the Assumption School at the end of the current school year due to an increasing financial burden to the parish.

Teachers and staff were notified during a meeting with the pastor and principal on Monday, April 11th. Parents are being informed today, Tuesday, April 12th via a letter from the pastor, which was sent home with students.

In his letter to parents, Rev. Jorge Reyes, OSA, pastor of St. Mary's, wrote, "I have come to this difficult decision in light of the financial situation of our school. For the past few years our school has operated with a significant deficit. We presently have a debt of close to \$300,000 and we anticipate future deficits as costs continue to increase. It has also become painfully clear over the past several months that the parish no longer has the fiscal resources to fund the school at the level required. I have made every effort and reviewed every possible opportunity to overcome our financial burdens but have concluded that we have no alternative but to close."

In addition, parish and school leaders are working with the Catholic Schools Office for the Archdiocese to arrange an Open House for all parents and guardians that will take place at St. Mary of the Assumption School at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, April 26. Lawrence Catholic Academy and other area Catholic schools will be present.

St. Mary of the Assumption School was founded in 1859 by the sisters of Notre Dame. The school enrollment has remained stable and currently stands at 270 students. However the schools debt to the parish has grown steadily in recent years at a time when the parish can no longer sustain the expenditure of funds.

Fr. Reyes concluded his letter to parents by writing, "This is difficult news, but with God's grace and the strength of our teachers, staff, and parishioners we will make the most of each day and work together to assure that the students will end this year and look toward their future with great hope."

A full copy of the letter follows:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It is with great sadness that I write today to inform you that St. Mary of the Assumption School will close at the end of the current academic year.

I have come to this difficult decision in light of the financial situation of our school. For the past few years our school has operated with a significant deficit. We presently have a debt of close to \$300,000 and we anticipate future deficits as costs continue to increase. It has also become

painfully clear over the past several months that the parish no longer has the fiscal resources to fund the school at the level required. I have made every effort and reviewed every possible opportunity to overcome our financial burdens but have concluded that we have no alternative but to close.

I realize that this news is cause for great concern for you as you wonder about the future education of your children. While St. Mary of the Assumption School must close, this will not mean the end of Catholic education for our students. We are working with the Catholic Schools Office for the Archdiocese to arrange an Open House for all parents and guardians that will take place at St. Mary of the Assumption School at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, April 26. Lawrence Catholic Academy and other area Catholic schools actively invite all families to visit them during the Open House and will make every effort to welcome them into their schools. In this way we hope to help you with a smooth transition for your child to their next school.

I am grateful to our wonderful principal, Ms. Vina Troianello, our outstanding teachers, our dedicated staff, and our faithful school board for their commitment to providing a vibrant Catholic educational experience to our students. My sincere gratitude also, to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur whose great legacy and charism has sustained the school for generations. We are also grateful to our many parishioners who have given so much of their time and treasure to support a Catholic school as an important part of our parish mission. As always, my Augustinian brothers have been a great source of strength to me personally.

This is difficult news, but with God's grace and the strength of our teachers, staff, and parishioners we will make the most of each day and work together to assure that the students will end this year and look toward their future with great hope.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and your family.

God bless you,

Rev. Jorge Reyes, OSA