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Diocese of St. Cloud*

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November 1, 2009
The Feast of All Saints

Dear Saint Joseph Parishioners:

I promised in a letter last week that I would more fully address the issue of the Metro Area Planning Process with you. I do not want to lose the momentum of the positive outcomes of that process, so the time to address it is now.

A few vocal people, acting on rumors and misinformation, attempted to derail the good work of the committed Option Committee members. I will not allow this to happen.

I am grateful for the members who honored the process, understood the need for a wholistic approach to Catholic Education and joined the pastors in their goal for stronger programs and better formed Catholics in the metro area. Thank you to those who were able to look to the common good.

Moving forward, I still support the need to address both Catholic schools and Faith Formation programs. First, I am asking each of the 15 parishes to enter into immediate discussion in their parish or cluster and to formulate a total parish religious education plan by May 2010. This plan is to address adult faith formation, youth ministry, evangelization, social justice, and ministry to the non-English speaking people in our community. The model set forth by the Options group is a strong concept for this plan.

To ensure the presence of Catholic schools in this area of the Diocese of Saint Cloud, the following parishes will immediately engage in conversation regarding Catholic schools:

- St. Mary Cathedral, St. Augustine, Christ Church Newman Center, St. Anthony, St. John Cantius, Holy Spirit, Sacred Heart and St. Francis Xavier

The remainder will engage in conversation by January 2010:

- St. Mary Help of Christian and St. Wendelin
- St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Michael, St. Joseph/Waite Park and St. Joseph/St. Joseph

I also am asking Cathedral High School/John XXIII to be invited to be a part of these discussions.

The above three parish groupings are each to come up with a plan that addresses the survival of Catholic schools by January 2011. We cannot allow the schools simply to close one by one when we can be stronger by working together in the metro area.

My prayers are with all of you.
With kind personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+John F. Kinney
Bishop of Saint Cloud