

OVERVIEW

St. Mary's parish family has supported Catholic Schools for well over a hundred years. From buildings and their upkeep to financial assistance and endless hours of labor; from a lived commitment to education to the spiritual guidance and support of parishioners, religious, deacons and priests, it has been a history that has blessed everyone who has attended our schools. We pledge our continued commitment.

In that spirit the Parish Assistance Program hopes to open to a new generation the great gift of Catholic education.

Parish Assistance provides a direct subsidy to parents of children who attend grades K through 8 of our Elementary School. It is one way that the parish supports our schools and those who wish to attend them.

Any assistance comes out of the life of the parish. In other words, assistance flows naturally from a parish that is active and alive. To receive this direct assistance, we ask that you are an active and supporting member of our parish.

Together we can continue to have one of the finest schools in Western Massachusetts. Together we can make Catholic education work.

THE PARISH PLEDGES

In the faith of Jesus Christ the parish pledges all the spiritual graces of the Catholic Church to further the formation provided through our school. We also pledge continued material support in maintaining and refurbishing the school building and grounds. We further pledge to contribute \$1,000 for each child in grades K-8 at the Elementary School that is sponsored by the parish.

In addition, the parish pledges to help every family with significant financial needs to meet the financial cost of attending our school.

EACH FAMILY PLEDGES

In order to receive tuition assistance for your child(ren) we ask you to meet the following program guidelines.

- 1) **Attend church regularly:** we know some cannot make every week due to travel or family obligations. But make a going to church a priority. We all need a little God-time.
- 2) **Live a life of service:** for many this will be within our PTO and school, but consider getting involved in the life of the parish. We need to see our families and students build up the kingdom of God.

- 3) **Give financially in the weekly collection:** we suggest trying to tithe. If that is too much, aim for \$20 per week. If that is still too hard, talk with Fr. Brian about what you can give to support the life of the parish. Your sponsorship is based more on the number of times you go to church than the total amount that you give.

As a suggested guideline we are asking families to contribute the following amounts in their parish envelopes:

- ❖ One child - \$20.00
- ❖ Two children – \$25.00
- ❖ Three children - \$30.00

"The Church is bidden by God and by events ... to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission."

- John Paul II, Catechesi Tradendae, 1979



OTHER MEANS OF SUPPORT

The Parish's assistance is only one means of support the Church offers. Others include:

Diocesan: the diocese supplies thousands upon thousands of dollars each year to people who attend our two schools. Applications are taken each year up until April 1. They can be obtained at each of the schools or online.

School Scholarships: St. Mary's School gives scholarships to needy families. Applications can be obtained at the principal's offices.

School Fundraising: participation in the fundraising activities of the school keeps tuition lower. Activities are designed to be fun and evenly distributed so that everyone involved feels more a part of the community and no one person feels like they are carrying the weight of all the fundraising.

NEW TAX GUIDELINES

The new federal tax code makes it easier for Catholic school families to meet annual tuition obligations. Per the 2017 Tax Cut and Job Act, effective January 2018, families can withdraw up to \$10,000 per year per student from that student's 529 plan to pay for K-12 tuition. The primary benefit of a 529 plan is that **earnings** in the plan are tax-free if used to pay qualified education expenses.

The change to the federal tax code follows upon changes to the MA tax code. Effective January 1, 2017 through the 2021 tax year, **contributions** to Massachusetts 529 plans of up to \$1,000 per year by an individual, and up to \$2,000 per year by a married couple filing jointly, are deductible in computing **Massachusetts** taxable income. Please be aware, in order for the contribution to be tax deductible on your Massachusetts state income tax return, the contribution must be made to a Massachusetts state sponsored plan.

Please note that St. Mary's School and St. Mary's Parish do not provide tax advice and we recognize that each family's financial circumstance is unique. We recommend that you consult your financial advisor or tax consultant to select the best options for your family.

Parishioner Assistance Program

for the families of St. Mary's



Parish

attending St. Mary's School



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