
The Roman Catholic Diocese of Knoxville



Contact: Deacon Sean Smith, chancellor
Phone: 865-584-3307
E-mail: ssmith@dioknox.org

The Chancery
805 Northshore Drive
Knoxville, Tenn. 37919
www.dioceseofknoxville.org

PRESS RELEASE AND MEDIA ADVISORY

For immediate release

Jan. 26, 2010

St. Mary School will accommodate all St. Dominic pupils who wish to transfer

KNOXVILLE—Although officials from St. Dominic Parish, St. Dominic School, and the Diocese of Knoxville have announced that the Kingsport elementary school will close at the end of the current academic year, St. Mary School in Johnson City will be able to make room for St. Dominic students who wish to transfer.

St. Mary School principal Randi McKee said Jan. 26 that there is currently no waiting list at her school. “We do not have a waiting list for any of our grades,” she said. “I actually do not have a class that’s at its full capacity.” Ms. McKee emphasized that St. Mary School will accommodate all potential transfer students from Kingsport.

“With the help of St. Dominic’s and the help of the diocese, we can work something out so that we can take just as many students as would want to come,” she said.

The two facilities are about 22 miles and 30 minutes’ driving distance apart.

Declining enrollment and an increasing financial burden to St. Dominic Parish in Kingsport led to the painful but inevitable decision to close St. Dominic School, say officials of the Diocese of Knoxville.

The Catholic elementary school is one of 10 schools administered through the diocese’s Catholic Schools Office.

The decision was announced to school parents Jan. 22 and to members of St. Dominic Parish on the weekend of Jan. 23 and 24.

The memo to parents from pastor Father Michael Nolan, schools superintendent Dr. Sherry Morgan, and Bishop Richard F. Stika, read, in part

Over the last 10 years enrollments in Catholic schools have declined nationally by 20 percent,

and our parish school has not been immune to this trend. For example, over the last four years, our K through 5 enrollment has declined from 83 students to 52. Although our parish provides school subsidy and tuition assistance totaling \$394,357, a preference for our CCD religious education has become evident, as CCD has experienced continual growth, now serving 279 students.

Prayerful consultation has occurred with our parish council; parish finance board; the diocesan finance officer, Deacon David Lucheon; the superintendent of Catholic schools, Dr. Sherry Morgan; the chancellor, Deacon Sean Smith; and Bishop Richard F. Stika. It has been determined that our parish school is no longer sustainable and [that we] cannot justify the ever-increasing demands on our parish resources. It has become evident that in spite of the sadness it causes us, we must close St. Dominic School at the end of this academic year (pre-K through fifth grade).

The full letter may be read at the St. Dominic Parish website, <http://www.saintdominicchurch.org/>.