



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

Cardinal Rigali Center
20 Archbishop May Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63119

Office of the Vicar General
Rev. Msgr. Mark S. Rivituso

October 20, 2016

Over the past several years a number of planning efforts have been initiated to address the challenges impacting our Catholic elementary schools in the City of St. Louis. The Catholic population has dropped by as much as 50 percent in some of our neighborhoods. Families are having fewer children than they did 30 years ago. Fewer Catholics are choosing to send their children to Catholic schools. As a result of these challenges, a number of our parishes throughout the city are struggling to maintain their schools. Archbishop Carlson has been pleased to be able to assist some of our city schools by providing direct financial assistance to meet the increasing operating costs.

However, pastors, principals, and parents have been seeking more long-term solutions to these challenges and have told me they are ready for a plan for the schools in the City of St. Louis that will ensure:

- academic excellence and strong Catholic formation for our children
- affordability for families and parishes
- accessibility to schools throughout the city
- the efficient and effective use of limited resources

I am very happy to announce that the Archdiocesan School Oversight Committee, which I chair, has developed a plan to address these issues. Some information about this plan is presented in the enclosed brochure. It is, as the title suggests, the time to engage the *changes* confronting us, answer the *challenges* ahead of us, and offer new *choices* for families as we move forward. The vision for a rebirth – a renaissance – of Catholic education was presented by Archbishop Carlson in his message, *Alive in Christ! A Pastoral Letter on handing on the faith to a young Church 2018*. This vision will be advanced with the new possibilities recommended for Catholic schools in the City of St. Louis.

In the coming weeks, representatives from the Archdiocesan School Oversight Committee will meet with you and present this plan in more detail and to gain further insights from you regarding the plan. Look for information about this meeting in a communication from your pastor and principal.

I am most grateful for all you sacrifice and do to provide a Catholic education for your children. You are an inspiration to me and I thank God for you and for all of those who are evangelizing the next generation of Catholics in our schools. I invite your good will and ask you to pray with me for the intercession of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne on behalf of all of our children who will receive many graces as they grow and mature in their faith in our Catholic Schools.

Sincerely in the name of Jesus Christ,

Reverend Monsignor Mark S. Rivituso
Vicar General, Archdiocese of St. Louis