

*Holy Trinity Church
749 Sixth Avenue South
South St. Paul, MN 55075*

15 December, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Advent greetings from Father Echert! As you may have heard, Holy Trinity School will remain a parish based school and will not be participating in the consolidated school that is projected for this region. This decision comes after months of discussion and prayerful deliberation, beginning with the Shared Resource Task Force that involved a dozen representatives from Holy Trinity Parish and continuing through to the present week.

As you know, one of the main issues that surfaced in the public presentation of the plan weeks ago revolved around the choice of campus for South St. Paul. The Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools attended that meeting and listened attentively to concerns that were voiced by many of you. I myself was deeply moved by the passion expressed by parents and parishioners at that time and was resolved to appeal to the Archbishop for a reconsideration of the campus. As you know, the Archbishop was very gracious and responded positively to our concern and directed that an independent assessment be done of the two school campuses of South St. Paul.

Subsequent to that initial appeal, based upon additional concerns, I made a second appeal to the Archbishop. That appeal was that Holy Trinity School be allowed to remain parish based and that we would not become a sponsoring parish for the new regional school. I made this appeal after consultation with and the support of the School Board, the Parish Council, the Finance Committee and our Trustees, based upon concerns related to pastoral oversight of the faith, finances and our facilities. I was also aware of a great many emails, letters and at least one petition signed by over eighty percent of our parents and guardians that went to the Archbishop--many were copied to me--which expressed grave concerns about the regional plan as it was proposed. I had good reason to believe that we would lose many school families to other schools and parishes, were we to regionalize.

Earlier this week I had a conference call with the Vicar General, the Superintendent of Schools and the Pastor of Saint John Vianney. At that time the results of the independent campus assessment were shared with us. While both campuses offer advantages, it was determined that Holy Trinity campus would be the preferred regional site for South St. Paul. That being said, given the overwhelming expressed desire of parents, parishioners and parish leadership to remain a parish based school, I exercised the option to remain as such. After all, the Shared Resource Process was intended to allow each parish school to discern what was best for its community. It became apparent through this process and in the wake of the initial decision that "best fit" for us is parish based.

I want to conclude with some words of gratitude. Heartfelt thanks go to the Archbishop and his representatives for responding in a timely, positive manner to our concerns. Special thanks also to the Superintendent and her associates, who were willing to listen and reassess the decision. Thanks go to our own faculty and school staff, which has remained loyal to Holy Trinity School through times of testing. And thanks to all of you, parents and guardians, for your passion and love and support for our parish school. I hope that this news will be received as a special Christmas gift by all of you and I look forward to starting the New Year with confidence in our future.

A blessed Christmas to you,



Father John Paul Echert