



# ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

May 21, 2020

Dear Members of the Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena Parish-School Communities,

Over the past two weeks, the Archdiocese of Denver has been engaged in conversation and reflection with the pastors and leadership of the Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena Parish communities about the future of the parish school ministry of each parish. Indeed, when the pastors communicated with you on May 1, 2020, there was the recognition of a sobering reality: the school ministry at each parish could no longer continue to operate under its current configuration.

Per the analysis undertaken to date, one could conclude that a reasoned approach would be to close both parish-schools without further discussion. However, Archbishop Aquila and the leadership of the Archdiocese of Denver firmly believe that our Catholic schools are one of the best instruments of evangelization of children and families of Northern Colorado (Worthy of the Name, 2016). Therefore, recognizing the critical role the mission of Catholic education plays in effectively carrying out the mission that the Lord entrusted to the care of the Church (Mt 28:19), we were moved to be led by our Lord to seek new models for the continued renewal of our Catholic educational ministry in the Archdiocese of Denver. Amid the crisis we are facing, we declare that the Lord is calling us to, "... a renewal of purpose and to reorganization," and, "...to be witnesses of faith during an era of instability and at the same time to act as agents of creative institutional change for which adequate models hardly exist," (To Teach as Jesus Did, #183).

The Lord has shown us that the path forward in a way that preserves the Catholic educational mission of our two schools is to create a new regional, diocesan Catholic school program that will combine the parish school ministries of Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena into one school program with a renewed vision and reconfiguration that enables the new school to thrive in ways that the current structure does not facilitate. As such, **we are happy to announce today that we will not be suffering the loss of two school communities, but instead will be embarking together with Holy Trinity Parish and St. Catherine of Siena Parish to create a new and renewed school program that will bring the best of our two communities beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year.**

This new Preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grade school will be neither Holy Trinity or St. Catherine of Siena, but will be a new program with a new name (to be determined) where your children will be greatly loved and cared for by a committed group of faculty and staff from both schools that will work as a new team to ensure that the history and legacy of both communities is honored. As such, **this will no longer be a traditional 'parish-school,' but instead will be supervised and overseen by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Office of Catholic Schools, on behalf of the Archbishop of Denver.**

This new structure will allow the Archdiocese to be able to provide the necessary support and oversight needed to ensure maximum operational efficiencies, financial viability, and institutional excellence to build an exceptional Catholic school program. The Office of Catholic Schools will also be providing direction and oversight of the academic program, the implementation of the curricular standards, and the tracking of student performance through yearly strategic goal setting efforts and bi-annual reviews of the progress towards the goals.

Nevertheless, our new school will still be a 'parish-based' ministry and **will operate out of Holy Trinity Parish**, which has the school facilities needed to grow and sustain a high-quality Catholic educational experience. While the Archdiocese of Denver will take on the responsibility for the new school, Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena Parishes have agreed to be 'Sponsor Parishes' that will provide both spiritual and financial support for the new school. Critical to the success of this new regional, diocesan school will be the engagement and commitment from each



*The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is an investment in the future of our children and our Catholic faith.*

1300 South Steele Street • Denver, CO 80210-2599

Phone: 303.715.3200 • [www.archden.org](http://www.archden.org)

Sponsor Parish and its Parishioner base to support the ministerial and financial health of the new school. The new arrangement will allow us to be able have the necessary financial support for the school program, but at a rate that is much more sustainable and healthier for both Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena than in past years.

We are also pleased to announce that **Dr. Ann Zeches, current Principal of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School, will be retained as the Principal of our new school.** Although in her first year as principal of St. Catherine of Siena, Dr. Zeches comes with vast experience as a school leader in Tuscon, AZ. She will be tasked with creating an excellent Catholic school program that provides students a rigorous intellectual and spiritual formation that honors them as learners and as sons and daughters of God. We have great confidence that she is the right person for the job.

The priests of Holy Trinity and of the Community of the Beatitudes of St. Catherine of Siena will be sharing the duty of providing Mass for the school community on an agreed upon schedule to be worked out between the school leadership and the respective pastors. Once crafted, the schedule will be published to the community. The priests will also be present for the school community at various moments. It will be a great blessing to count on both communities to provide the spiritual fatherhood and pastoral support for our new school. We are very grateful to both Fr. Piotr Mozdyniewicz and Fr. Nilson Leal C.B. for their openness to this new program and their willingness to provide the supports needed to ensure we form an exceptional and faithful Catholic School program.

Dr. Zeches and the Office of Catholic Schools will be forming a transition teams composed of members of both Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena to help guide the creation of the new school program, culture, and traditions in a way that brings in the best of both communities and connects the new school ethos to the history and traditions of both Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena. Should you have interest in being a part of this team or contributing to their efforts, please reach out to Dr. Zeches at [ann.zeches@archden.org](mailto:ann.zeches@archden.org).

Lastly, we invite you to read the **Key Information** document attached to this letter where you will find some additional important information.

Our Lord has given us a great opportunity to together create something that stands as a shining example of how to pull through what might seem are insurmountable challenges to continue to sustain our Catholic educational mission. Please know too, that we do recognize that there may be some sadness in the community as this does represent the culmination of an era, one that has faithfully served many generations. If you find yourself in this situation, we hope you'll see in this moment an opportunity to keep the legacy of your community alive as a foundation for the beginning of something renewed that will continue to serve families and children for many more generations.

As valued members of the community, your support will be critical for the success of our new school. We invite you to join us to be a part this movement to ensure our Catholic mission thrives for many more years to come.

We ask God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to bless our efforts and we ask for the intercession of St. Catherine of Siena.

*"Behold, I make all things new."* – Revelation 21:5

Your servant in Christ,



Elias J. Moo  
Superintendent of Catholic School



**Establishment of New Diocesan PreK-8th School  
Combining Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena Parish-Schools**

**Key Information**

**1) How will this new school be configured?**

Though final configuration is still in discussion, it is feasible to form a separate non-parish, non-profit diocesan school that will combine both school ministries into one new regional school. This new school will be subject to the direct oversight and authority of the Archbishop and the Archdiocese of Denver, through the Archbishop's delegate, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and the Office of Catholic Schools.

The Principal will report directly to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. In the existing structure the Principal would have reported or sought supervisory support through the parish Pastor.

**2) What is the benefit of having a new regional, diocesan school? Will separating it from the parish hurt the school?**

This new structure will allow the Archdiocese to be able to provide the greater support, oversight, and the additional expertise needed to build an exceptional Catholic school. It will also maximize operational efficiencies and financial viability. In their current configuration, Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena are having to invest many of their resources and duplicate efforts to just maintain the current program. This new structure allows the Archdiocese to be able to put in place new systems, supervision, and controls that can better protect and safeguard the quality of the school program and mitigate crisis situations. It also allows the school leadership to have direct access to necessary professional supports needed to run a successful school that in the current configuration would not be readily available.

Although the school will be different in its structure, connections to both Holy Trinity and St. Catherine of Siena will be important for the life of the school, as will the presence of the priests of both parishes. In essence, the new structure will allow us to alleviate the parish of the administrative burden of running a school-ministry, while still maintaining the close connections with the pastoral life of the parish that is needed to have a thriving school community.

**3) How long is the Archdiocese planning on keeping this school going? How will you ensure the school does not face closure again?**

The Archdiocese of Denver is deeply committed to building a sustainable model that will remain for many years. This is not just a one-year experiment to try to save the school mission of the two parishes. Our intent is truly to build an excellent Catholic school program that can serve as a model. As such, the Archdiocese is putting forth a long-term commitment to see this through. We are not interested in being a part of a short-lived project. We are all in.

To ensure that the school does not meet a similar set of challenges as those the current schools are facing today, the school will be establishing a local advisory board to provide additional oversight and supervision over the financial affairs and operations of the school and to assist with the crafting of long-term plans for the future.

**4) If I already registered at either Holy Trinity or St. Catherine of Siena, do I need to re-register for this new school?**

No, you will not need to re-register. The new school will honor and transfer your registration from either Holy Trinity or St. Catherine of Siena. You may be asked to sign another document that updates your registration to the new school, but your registration will continue to remain in place for the 2020-2021 academic year.

**5) I have not registered yet, but I am very interested in registering now. Can I still sign up?**

Yes! We would love to have you be a part of this new school! To register, we ask that you go through the process of your current school program. This will be honored and transferred to the new school.

St. Catherine families will be able to register with Dr. Zeches at the school. Holy Trinity families will be able to register with both Dr. Zeches and Mr. Kline, who will be assisting in transitioning the Holy Trinity program to the new school.

**6) How much will tuition and registration cost? If I already registered is my tuition going to change or will costs go up?**

For this first year, the tuition for the K-8 program of the new school will be set at:

<b>Affiliated Catholic Families</b>	<b>\$5,200</b>
<b>Non-Affiliated Families</b>	<b>\$6,200</b>

*\*For multiple children there will be a 10% discount for each additional child. The school will work with families that need tuition assistance.*

**It is also the intent to offer both a 3-year-old and 4-year-old preschool program. The offerings will be dependent on interest from families.**

Tuition for the preschool program will be **\$5,445**.

If you have already registered your costs will not go up. If you are paying the full cost of tuition, your rate will be adjusted to reflect the new rate, if necessary. If you have already registered and receive tuition assistance, the new school will honor any tuition assistance that has been committed to you.

If you have not yet registered and are a current family at Holy Trinity or St. Catherine of Siena, your tuition will be determined by the cost structure above. If you are a K-8 family interested in applying for tuition assistance, you will need to complete the Variable Tuition Program application. This will determine the discounted tuition rate and financial aid you might receive for the new school program. To apply for tuition assistance, please visit: <https://denvercatholicschools.com/variabletuitionprogram/>

Registration fees will be as follows:

<b>"New School Special" until June 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>\$200 1<sup>st</sup> child/\$250 per family</b>
<b>After June 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>\$250 1<sup>st</sup> child/\$350 per family</b>

*\*For any families that have already paid a registration fee higher than the "New School Special," you will be credited the amount over \$250 that you paid to your first tuition bill.*



**7) Will before school and after-school care be available?**

Yes. The school is committed to continuing to provide this support for families. This is currently being developed. The hours and the cost will be communicated to families over the summer. Please know the cost will be reasonable and affordable as a support for families.

**8) If I am a St. Catherine's family, is it possible for me to see the Holy Trinity facilities?**

Absolutely! St. Catherine families that wish to receive a tour will be able to schedule times to visit the Holy Trinity facilities to see what they look like. Due to social distancing measures, we will have to keep it limited to a few family units at a time and each family member 3 years and older will need to wear a mask. We will have two options to come and visit the Holy Trinity campus and visit with Dr. Zeches about the new school.

She will be available to conduct tours on Tuesday and Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup> from noon to 6pm. Information to sign up will be emailed to you by Dr. Zeches.

**9) If I am a Holy Trinity family, is it possible to meet with Dr. Zeches?**

Yes! Dr. Zeches wants to meet with as many Holy Trinity families as possible in the coming weeks and months before the start of the next academic year. To make this happen she will be hosting meetings with Holy Trinity families both in person and via Zoom. More information on how to sign up for those will be sent to you in the next week.

**10) We would like to meet the families from Holy Trinity/St. Catherine's that will be part of our next community. Will that be possible before the start of next year?**

Definitely! Dr. Zeches will be planning various opportunities for gatherings to take place before the start of the next academic year, including Zoom meetings between with the new school community and gatherings over the summer. As those are developed, more information will be shared with you.

**11) What will the academic program be like at the new school?**

In terms of the types of classes offered, you will not see a significant difference. Reading, writing, history, math, science, and faith formation, along with art/PE/music, will be taught in the school. What might look different will be what students are taught and how they are taught.

The academic program will follow the curriculum content guidelines and scope and sequence set forth by the Office of Catholic Schools ( <https://archden.org/schools/office-catholic-schools/curricula/> ) and to the full scope of the curricular standards set forth by the Cardinal Newman Society Catholic Curriculum Standards ( <https://newmansociety.org/educator-resources/resources/academics/catholic-curriculum-standards/> ).

Learning will be infused with a rich Catholic worldview and the focus will be for students to learn how to read, write, and speak exceptionally and reason like Catholic thinkers. Students will be taught the foundations of language so they can be better readers and writers. They will develop the foundations of mathematics to successfully learn more advanced math concepts. History will be taught with a focus on the central role of Christ in human history and the role of Christianity in the development of civilization. Science

will be an inquiry and discovery-based study of the natural world that God created, through the study of the scientific process via hands-on learning experiences. All throughout the learning, students will be exposed to the truths of the faith, the nature of God, and the pursuit of wisdom, the knowledge of truth.

Ultimately the school program will be focused on the cultivation of intellectual habits and virtues in students that will enable them to be highly proficient in fundamental academic skills and able to demonstrate growth as followers of Christ.

Students from all backgrounds will be able to thrive in this academic environment.

#### **12) What extracurricular offerings will there be for the school?**

The hope is to continue to expand the extracurricular offerings. Athletics will be a major part of offerings. We are blessed that Holy Trinity has great facilities for PE and athletics.

As our program grows, we hope to have additional extracurricular offerings.

#### **13) Will the uniform change?**

The uniform is an important element of the identity of a school program. With the new school program starting, we will need a new uniform. Dr. Zeches and her transition team, with input from the community, will be working on developing a new uniform that will have our new school name and new logo.

Until then, for this next year, students may wear navy blue or khaki pants or skirts (girls only), and a white, navy blue, or red polo shirt. More information on the uniform will also be sent to families over the summer months.

#### **14) What will be the start and end of the school day?**

At this point it is envisioned that the day will go from 8am to 3:15pm. More information on the schedule will be communicated to families over the summer months.

#### **15) Will the school have preparation for First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation?**

Yes. Preparation for those sacraments will be a part of the curriculum for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. We will work with both St. Catherine of Siena and Holy Trinity Parish to identify the plan for the administration of those sacraments to the students.

#### **16) What is going to happen to the teachers? Who will be the teachers of the new school?**

With the consolidation of the school program, we will not be able to keep the full faculty and staff of each school. All faculty and staff members have been informed that they can put their name forward for consideration for the positions of the new school. The Archdiocese has also pledged support to assist them in transitioning to other schools if they decide to move in another direction for employment or if they are not selected to be a part of the new school program.

The Office of Catholic Schools, Dr. Zeches, and Mr. Kline have been leading an interview and hiring process for all those faculty and staff members from both communities who have said that they wish to be a part of

the new school program. The new faculty and staff will continue to be deeply committed to provide a nurturing, loving learning environment that is safe and secure for your children, while committing to a renewed set of high standards and expectations for students.

We are tremendously grateful to the current faculty and staff for all they have done to support their schools during their time at their schools.

**17) Why will the new school be at Holy Trinity and not St. Catherine of Siena?**

A school marked by excellence needs facilities that allow for the safest possible learning environment and that facilitate different configurations of support for students. Holy Trinity has the building infrastructure and features that will enable our new school program to continue to grow and thrive for years to come. The facilities include multiple classrooms with ample square footage, a regulation sized gymnasium with stadium seating, outdoor playground, and field spaces for students to run and play. These features will support the development of a quality Catholic school program and ultimately, give our students the Catholic school experience that they deserve to have.

**18) How will I know that my child will find success at this new school?**

Children find success with a strong parent-school relationship that is rooted in mutual respect and trust. Our new school program will be built on the Church's belief that parents are the principal and primary educators of their children. Our mission as a Catholic school is to assist and empower parents in their duty to help their children come to know, love, and serve Jesus and this Church. The faculty and staff of our new school will be working in partnership with parents, the primary educators of their children, to nurture, love, and challenge each student so as each child can succeed at the highest level possible.

If you have further questions about the new school, please contact Dr. Zeches by emailing her at [ann.zeches@archden.org](mailto:ann.zeches@archden.org) or calling 303-477-8035.



*The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is an investment in the future of our children and our Catholic faith.*

1300 South Steele Street • Denver, CO 80210-2599

Phone: 303.715.3200 • [www.archden.org](http://www.archden.org)