

Friday, November 11th, 2016



Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are reaching out to you during this very exciting time to introduce some upcoming changes for our school system.

Our School Board and Administration, with the guidance and support of the Archdiocese of Chicago, as well as identified Focus Groups, have worked diligently and compassionately to take the appropriate strides to continue the growth, evolution and vitality of Catholic education in our communities.

We welcome you to read the attached document and browse our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) to discover more. Once again, we are elated to be on the forefront of innovation in our Catholic faith and school improvement plans.

Feel free to contact Ms. Kleckner, School Principal, to discuss further at cclprincipal@gmail.com or (847) 487-5600. Below you will find a list of **Coffee & Conversation** dates Ms. Kleckner will be hosting in the upcoming weeks for those who would like to speak in further detail.

We thank you and appreciate all the love and support you have provided us throughout the years and that you will provide for our future leaders!

God Bless You!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tammy Kleckner'.

Ms. Tammy Kleckner - School Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'RM Bobber'.

Mr. Robert Bobber - School Board President

Father Ron Lewinski - President

Father Jerry Jacob - St. Mary of the Annunciation

Father David Arcila - Santa Maria del Popolo

Father Juan Pablo Avila - Transfiguration

Coffee & Conversation Dates:

1. Monday, November 14th, 7:00PM - Pollone Library, Frassati Catholic Academy
2. Wednesday, November 16th, 9:30AM - St. Mary Teacher's Lounge
3. Friday, November 18th, 7:00AM - Pollone Library, Frassati Catholic Academy

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

From the time of its creation in 2010, Frassati Catholic Academy (Frassati) has been a model of innovation in Catholic education. Recently, two new Catholic institutions, Northside Catholic Academy and Pope Francis Global Academy, opened in Chicago under the direction of the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) of the Archdiocese of Chicago. In creating these new schools, both born out of the merger of several struggling parish-based schools, the OCS consciously drew inspiration from Frassati Catholic Academy and its success. Please check out these exciting new schools: Pope Francis Global Academy - www.pfgacademy.org and Northside Catholic Academy - www.northsidecatholic.org.

The goal of these recent mergers has been to ensure long-term vitality of Catholic education at a time in which the historic parochial school model has been struggling to survive amidst unprecedented cultural and demographic challenges. The Catholic Consortium of Lake County (CCLC) was created in 2014, in cooperation with the OCS through the Archdiocese Initiative Model (AIM) agreement, as a means to foster greater cooperation among St. Mary of the Annunciation, Transfiguration and Santa Maria del Popolo elementary schools and Frassati Catholic Academy. The idea was simple: we are stronger together than we are separate. Drawing on a wealth of shared experience, the CCLC allowed for a greater unification of curriculum, creation of a common administration and school board, and greater spirit of cooperation among the three parish communities. Though the intent was to create one school out of the three parochial institutions and shared middle school within the CCLC, it has become evident over the past two years; this goal would never be fully realized under the somewhat confusing and awkward CCLC brand.

Now, informed by those lessons, and with the support of the OCS, the administration and board of the CCLC are moving forward on a long-term strategic initiative to strengthen our brand identity and further ensure the viability of Catholic education in Lake County while continuing to serve as a model for the evolution of Catholic education. Not just in the Archdiocese of Chicago, but around the country as well. The next step in the journey, which we are beginning today, is complete unification of our schools into one institution. To that end, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the Catholic Consortium of Lake County brand, along with the St. Mary of the Annunciation and Transfiguration elementary school names, will be replaced with one name: **Frassati Catholic Academy - Elementary and Middle School**. This change is being made to underscore that we are one school, with two locations. The Mundelein and Wauconda campuses on the grounds of St. Mary of the Annunciation and Transfiguration parishes respectively will continue to exist unchanged.

We are very excited to share this news with our school community. We also know that our students and parents, as well as members of our wider parish communities will have many questions. The attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will hopefully answer many of those questions. It must be emphasized that this change is not being undertaken lightly, rather as the result of a careful, deliberate process, guided by the undeniable realities facing Catholic education today. The Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago has determined in order to remain financially viable, each Catholic school requires a minimum enrollment of 225 students annually. At present, the total combined enrollment of the CCLC, preschool through 8th grade, is 337 students. Long-term trends in parochial school enrollment,

as well as broader demographic trends, indicate alone, none of our three schools could sustain the minimum enrollment figure cited above. This is the reason the CCLC was created in 2014, and this is a principle reason further unifying our school under one name is the best forward movement for us today.

Our school is by no means unique; parish schools, nationwide, are experiencing the same challenges. The ones emerging the strongest are those unifying as independent, regional schools. The historic parish-based model of Catholic education served the church and the nation well in the past century and a half. It simply will not be sustainable in the future. We are most definitely not losing our connection to our parishes, our alumni or our history. Change is never easy and we understand for generations, our schools have been rooted in their parish communities. As a result many have deep loyalties and affection to these identities. In taking this bold step, we are demonstrating to our school families and our broader parish communities we are unafraid to embrace change when it is necessary, to ensure the continued survival of Catholic education for our children and grandchildren. Strong, viable and robust Catholic schools have never been needed more in our society. We will need engagement, support and dedication of all the members of our community, students, parents, parishioners, teachers and community leaders alike, to ensure we succeed in our mission to be such a school.

It is important to note the change we are undertaking within our school community is very much aligned with the multi-year, Archdiocesan-wide **Renew My Church** initiative announced by Archbishop Blasé Cupich last year. As the archbishop declared when he announced this ground-breaking effort, *“if we stay together and work together, we can bring about the renewal that Christ is asking of us in this process.”* Archbishop Cupich reminds us we are merely stewards of Christ’s church and its institutions. He calls all of us within the Archdiocese of Chicago to be open to the Holy Spirit in our midst and to look for ways to work together across traditional parish, school and geographic boundaries. To ensure we hand this precious inheritance to the next generation stronger than we received it, we are bringing our school community together under one identity and one mission. We are responding to that call and taking up that challenge.

The unification of our school under the patronage and charism of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati is above all, an exercise in stewardship and an essential first step in a process that will not only make our school fiscally sustainable, but most importantly, enable us to truly work together as one community. This is will then ensure our children and future generations of children in Lake County will continue to receive the most spiritually and academically rigorous Catholic education possible. In the end, our greatest mission is to raise up disciples of Christ, young men and women prepared to live the gospel fully and bring that gospel to the world in all they do. As we embark on this exciting journey, we invite all of you to walk with us as we *reach for the heights*. We cannot do this without the support, commitment and engagement of all of our school and parish families. There will be more exciting announcements to come and many opportunities for engagement and leadership. For now, please see the attached Frequently Asked Questions document and feel free to contact Ms. Tammy Kleckner, school principal, at cclprincipal@gmail.com or at (847)487-5600 with any further questions.

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FAQ's

Why Frassati Catholic Academy?

We wanted to choose a patron that our young students could identify with. Earlier conversations suggested theological names such as "Holy Trinity." Everyone agreed a theological name would not exactly have much appeal to young students. Pier Giorgio Frassati was a normal young man with strong faith, an athlete, avid skier and mountain climber, and he was the life of the party. In all of this he embodied what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Through the study of Pier Giorgio's life, our students would be able to catch a glimpse of how a normal person can become a saint. He, therefore, becomes someone to emulate. Holiness and Christian discipleship is not beyond reach. The real life model of Blessed Pier Giorgio is a personal introduction to lived faith.

In the first few years we discovered that choosing Blessed Pier Giorgio was the right thing to do. Students easily identified with him and were inspired by his life. The intention of the Spiritual Charter was to draw from the charisms or spiritual gifts that made Pier Giorgio the man and Christian disciple that he was. To follow the charisms in the Spiritual Charter would be the way to become like Pier Giorgio Frassati, a person of the Beatitudes, someone who always "reaches for the heights".

How is our school changing?

Our school is being unified under one name as the final step in realizing our goal of becoming one, unified regional Catholic school. Replacing the Catholic Consortium of Lake County name and retiring the St. Mary of the Annunciation and Transfiguration elementary school names will underscore that we are definitively one school. We will continue to maintain both campuses unchanged. The Mundelein Campus at St. Mary of the Annunciation will remain a preschool through 5th grade campus and the Wauconda Campus will continue to offer preschool through eighth grade. No longer will there be three separate entities united under the consortium, but truly one school. Students transitioning from 5th into 6th grade will no longer be considered to be changing schools.

What is the Archdiocesan Initiative Model (AIM) agreement?

It is a model of governance that oversees the leadership and finances of schools. In Parish schools, the Pastor is the Juridic and overseer of the school(s). In AIM schools, the Office of Catholic Schools take on that role.

Will this strengthen our parish relationships?

Absolutely! We are working to build stronger partnerships with our three parish communities; St. Mary of the Annunciation, Transfiguration and Santa Maria del Popolo. Our students will continue to attend weekly school mass at their adjacent parishes and our priests will remain visible and active members of the school community, visiting class rooms and assisting in instruction as they always have. In addition, students will continue to participate in sacramental preparation at their own parishes.



FAQ's

What is the *Renew My Church* initiative?

The advancement of pastoral and missionary conversion across parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago. You can find out more by logging onto: www.archchicago.org/renew

How will this change position our school for long-term success?

Fully combining our school under one name with a common logo, mascot, and brand will dramatically aid in our recruitment efforts and will allow us to improve and streamline our curriculum, internet presence, technology infrastructure, advertising materials and community outreach efforts. Furthermore, this change puts us on the leading edge of the evolution in Catholic education as the historical parochial school model gives way to a new regional paradigm. As our enrollment increases, the increased scale will allow for an expansion of extracurricular and athletic activities that our small, separate schools currently cannot support.

What are Focus Groups?

Throughout the Strategic Planning process, our school board, alongside our school and Archdiocese administration identified Focus Groups to help with our decision making and development process. These groups have different tasks at hand and some will be in use longer than others. These groups include: Teachers, Parent, Parent Association, Athletics, Marketing, and Parish Leaders.

What about uniforms?

A parent focus group has been created to assist in the selection of a new Frassati Catholic Academy uniform. While final decisions have not been made, there may continue to be distinction between the elementary and middle school uniforms but the differences between the two elementary school uniforms will be phased out. There will be a 1-2 year transition period during which students can continue to wear the old uniforms while a new uniform exchange is created. Look for more details in the coming months.

And what will the mascot and school colors be?

Our mascot will be the Eagle as it best exemplifies our school motto: Reach for the Heights. Since the creation of Frassati Catholic Academy as a middle school in 2010, several different eagle graphics have been used. We are currently in the process of selecting one eagle image to use for all uniforms and spirit wear. School colors will remain maroon and gold. We will unveil the new sports uniforms and mascot in the coming months.



FAQ's

How will our current sports programs change?

For the foreseeable future, we anticipate very little change for students currently involved in athletics. Both elementary campuses will continue to offer separate teams, however, all teams will now compete as Frassati Catholic Academy with a common team name, mascot and spirit wear. As mentioned above, we hope that increased enrollment will allow for an expansion of athletic and extracurricular offerings in the years to come.

Will we have one parent association?

Yes, we will. Ms. Kleckner, our principal, is working with the current parent associations to outline the mission, by-laws and membership of the new Frassati parent association.

Will our current parish school signage, logos and letterhead change?

The school board and administration are working with the respective parishes to determine how the signage will change. While we want to honor the history of our legacy schools and continue to highlight the connection to our member parishes, we also want to reinforce that we are one school. No final decisions have yet been made. There will likely be a period of transition from the current to the new signage. The new school logo will be an updated version of the existing Frassati Catholic Academy logo with the words "elementary & middle school" added.

What does this mean for alumni of our legacy schools?

It means an opportunity to celebrate! We have chosen this path to ensure the survival and success of Catholic education in our corner of Lake County. We are currently working to build a unified alumni database and to strengthen our connection to all of our alumni. In the future, we hope to offer alumni days, class reunions and even an alumni publication and annual report. In addition, we intend to create display cases and other exhibits that will honor the history of our legacy schools.

What if I have more questions or would like to speak further in regards to this topic?

Please feel free to reach out to Ms. Kleckner, School Principal, at cclprincipal@gmail.com or (847) 487-5600.