

LEADING BY EXAMPLE



From the time of its creation in 2010, Frassati Catholic Academy (Frassati), the common middle school shared by the elementary schools of Santa Maria del Popolo, St. Mary of the Annunciation and Transfiguration parishes 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.

The goal of these recent mergers has been to ensure long-term viability of Catholic education at a time in which the historic parochial school model has been struggling. The Catholic Consortium of Lake County (CCLC) was created in 2014 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 separately. 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 our three parish communities. Though the intent was to create one school out of the three parochial institutions and shared middle school, it has become evident this goal could never be fully realized under the somewhat confusing and awkward CCLC brand.

Therefore, 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 momentous step is being taken to underscore we are truly 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. The unification of our schools under one name will enable us to market our school much more effectively and to tout our brand and our successes.

We are very excited to share this news with our parish communities! 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 with the support of their founding parishes. Recognizing the parochial school model simply is no longer sustainable in the long run, our school board and administration, in consultation with the OCS, as well as the pastors of Santa Maria, St. Mary and Transfiguration have chosen to make this change because it best positions our school for long term success. It is important to stress that the school is most definitely not losing its connection to our parishes, our alumni or our history. Students will continue to attend weekly mass at their respective parishes and continue to participate in sacramental preparation and altar serving at their own parishes. More exciting news is to come in the coming months as we unveil the new Frassati Catholic Academy uniforms, sports logo, spirit wear and campus signage. Members of our parish communities are always welcome to tour our campuses and we will continue to post regular school updates in the parish bulletins.

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 for these identities. In taking this bold step, we are demonstrating 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 our parishes and broader communities 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 Blase Cupich. As the Archbishop declared, *"if we stay together and work together, we can bring about the renewal that Christ is asking of us in this process."* He reminds us we are merely stewards of Christ's church and its institutions. He calls all of us to be open to the Holy Spirit in our midst and look for ways to work together across traditional parish, school and geographic boundaries. Responding to this call, we are fully unifying our parish schools into one regional Catholic institution so we might hand this precious inheritance to the next generation stronger than we received it. The unification of our school under the patronage and charism of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati is, above all, an exercise in stewardship and will enable us to truly work together as one community. This will ensure our children and future generations will continue to receive the most spiritually and academically rigorous Catholic education possible. 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 your help, your support and your prayers.

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