

February 2017

Dear St. Gerard School Families,

Among the many ministries of St. Gerard Parish the faith development and religious education of all parishioners is certainly a priority. St. Gerard School is a shining example of the parish's commitment to the formation and education of its people in the ways of faith. Those of us involved in St. Gerard School, including priests, administrators, staff and parents, know firsthand that our school is first rate. Spiritually, academically, socially and athletically, it embodies the best of what Catholic Schools strive to be.

In order to maintain the school's excellence, we need the full support of the parish and the school families. I draw your attention, in particular, to the enclosed *Covenant Between St. Gerard Parish and St. Gerard School Families*. The covenant is a solemn commitment and heartfelt promise to provide what is best for our children. The parish promises to commit its personnel and resources to forming your children in the Catholic faith. You, in turn, *promise to worship with your children, support the mission of the parish with your tithing and talent, and support the mission of the school whenever and however possible.*

We are asking for a \$96 increase in tuition for the 2017-2018 school year. This increase is intended to help cover costs beyond our control, e.g. health insurance premiums, property insurance costs, facility upkeep, technology and necessary supplies. We will control those expenses that we can. One way will be your utilization of our online billing and payment system, SMART Tuition. This will streamline our tuition billing and collection procedures and will reduce our annual collection expenses.

The Bishop does not want families discouraged from sending their children to Catholic Schools because tuition rates are beyond what they can afford. We are proud to note that our tuition rate of \$3,000.00 is still well below the Diocesan average of \$3,700.00. The suggested weekly tithing commitment to the Sunday collection will remain at \$15.00. Keep in mind that both our tuition and weekly tithing commitment are among the lowest of any parish in the area. Additionally, we continue to keep our facilities in top notch condition; replacing our aging Boiler in 2012, our Windows in 2013, installing Wi-Fi in 2014, parking improvements in 2015 and exterior door improvements in 2016. This summer we will be replacing the last of the junior high windows and the county has scheduled repairs for W Willow Hwy. The facilities are in excellent condition.

Even with the tuition increase, we will need to ask all parishioners help with tithing increases to help offset the expenses. We are also hopeful the quality of our staff, programs and facilities will encourage additional students to join our school and further offset rising expenses. Please be as faithful to this commitment as you are to tuition payments since our school budget depends on this income.

As you know, the tuition, fees, and school fund raisers have traditionally covered only about 52% of the cost to run the school. The other 48% has come from parish subsidy (44%) and the Education Trust Fund (4%). Because of the parish's already substantial and growing subsidy to the school, it is even more essential that school families be faithful to the *Covenant* they sign. In maintaining your minimum contribution to the parish, you help us more easily justify the parish's financial commitment to the school. Many families tithe far more than the minimum, which is greatly appreciated. Other families, however, do not keep their commitment in spite of repeated reminders thus stressing the parish and school budget and eventually leading to larger tuition increases in the future.

Let us continue to work together to enhance the quality of St. Gerard School. We want our children to have the best faith formation and academic opportunities. Our efforts today will ensure the quality of our school long into the future.

In Christ,



Rev. John P. Klein, Pastor

P.S. Those families needing assistance can apply for financial aid. To receive any financial aid you MUST apply through the FACTS system by March 1, 2017. Please phone the school office for more details.

Covenant between St. Gerard Parish and St. Gerard School Families

We, the People of St. Gerard Parish, are committed to providing an environment where the children of our parish school:

- ❖ Are formed by our Catholic faith to know Jesus Christ;
- ❖ Are educated following the guidelines of the Diocese of Lansing;
- ❖ Are provided with opportunities to be strengthened in mind, body, and spirit.

As parents of a student enrolled at St. Gerard School, we are committed:

- ❖ To worshipping at St. Gerard with our children on a weekly basis;
- ❖ To supporting the mission of St. Gerard Parish by tithing our time, talent, and treasure (minimum of \$15.00/week);
- ❖ To supporting the mission of St. Gerard School by giving of our time and talents wherever needed.

As parish and school parents we enter into this covenant, asking God's blessing on us and the work we are called to do in His name.

Signature of Parent

Signature of Pastor

Signature of Parent

Signature of Principal

Date