



The Church of Saint Mary

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Dear Parents and Families of St. Mary's Elementary School,

As you probably have heard, our Diocese is launching a new initiative to bolster and revitalize Catholic elementary schools throughout Long Island. The Morning Star Initiative is named in honor of our Blessed Mother, whose appearance, like the morning star, always heralds the coming of the Sun of Justice, her son Jesus Christ. The initiative will involve a partnership between local educators and an international management consulting firm. It spells out four key themes: Catholic culture, academic excellence, safe and supportive community, and permanent commitment. This is a wonderful opportunity for us as members of the St. Mary's community to reaffirm and continue to build on our almost century-long tradition anchored in these very themes.

Since 1926, the Schools of St. Mary have been providing a rigorous academic education, anchored in a safe and supportive community and informed by a vibrant Catholic culture. At the heart of this culture is a respect for each person as a son or daughter of God. Not infrequently parents tell me how the St. Mary's community affects them: "I'm treated like a person here, and so is my child..." "We love the family atmosphere here..." "I'm so happy to be part of the St. Mary's community where I don't feel like a number..." And the comments on our academic program are no less emphatic. It is not uncommon for our graduates to be accepted to the most academically demanding high school programs in the Tri-state area, including Regis High School, St. Mary's College Preparatory High School, Chaminade High School, St. Anthony's High School, Mary Louis Academy, and Convent of the Sacred Heart.

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to assure you that the Morning Star Initiative will only continue to propel us forward in the work of continuous improvement for our elementary and high school students. Our Elementary and High School take great pride in the fact that this work has been in place for many years and has borne great fruit. As our Schools of St. Mary President, Dr. Joseph McCleary said recently to a group of alumni, "St. Mary's has always been about preparing students for a life of virtue, both intellectual and moral, a life of professional success and personal fulfillment. We are a preparatory school in every sense of the word..." For this reason, our ongoing commitment to an education in the classical liberal arts remains unchanged. Also unchanged is our Catholic identity. We want each student to grow in a life of prayer and holiness. To this end, we will continue to strengthen our classes in Catholic doctrine, while fostering a warm atmosphere of kindness and cheerful encouragement.

In the coming weeks, there will be more information about this exciting new initiative. Many in our community will have an opportunity to contribute to the effort in a variety of ways. I would like to encourage you to make your voice heard as we move forward together in the great work of education, for our children, and for the future of the Church on Long Island. Let us invoke the maternal help of Our Lady, the Morning Star, and the Patron of our school.

In Jesus and Mary,

Rev. Fr. Robert A. Romeo
Pastor