



Precious Blood Parish

Saint Agnes Church & Saint Mary Church

August 25, 2024

Dear Parents:

As the new school year approaches, I feel the need to write to you about something that has been weighing on me for several years now, even before the pandemic, namely the absence from Sunday Mass of so many parents and children enrolled in our school who claim membership in the parish.

It has been the practice for a number of years to extend a grant of **five hundred dollars** per student to be applied to tuition if they claim membership in the parish. This grant has been awarded almost universally without exception but I now think that it is time to revisit this policy and to make some significant changes.

It should go, almost without saying, that attendance and active participation at Sunday Mass is an obligation imposed, not by me or by Church law, but by divine law, that is, by God himself. I refer to the Third Commandment which reads, "*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*" As Catholics, we observe the sabbath on Sunday, and part of the requirement set down by the commandment is that we take time to rest, spend time with family and loved ones, and worship God by being present with other members of the parish at Sunday Mass. This is an obligation that cannot be dismissed lightly, and only the most serious of excuses would dispense one from fulfilling it. Attendance at Sunday Mass is expected of all Catholics every weekend.

This being said, I am instituting a new policy which will take effect beginning September 1 of this year. How families comply with that policy will affect whether or not a parish grant of five hundred dollars per student will be granted for the 2025-2026 school year. Please understand that this does not affect the tuition rates quoted for the upcoming school year, 2024-2025. The revised policy is included with this letter.

When you presented your children for baptism, however many years ago, you were told that you were the "first teachers of your children in the ways of faith" and that you were "to bring them up in the practice of their faith." Along with providing nurturing, good example, and a solid moral grounding, this obligation is fulfilled by you by being sure to bring them to Mass, have them receive the sacraments at the proper age, and insure that they receive formal religious instruction and formation.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Aidan N. Donahue
Pastor

OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

POLICY ON PARISH MEMBERSHIP FOR PURPOSES OF TUITION GRANTS

A grant of five hundred dollars will be applied toward the tuition account of each student enrolled at St. Mary's School will be awarded beginning with the **2025-2026** school year if the following conditions are met:

1. The family must be formally registered as members of Precious Blood Parish.
2. Formal membership in our parish means more than simply completing a registration form either on-line or on paper. It means more than simply just claiming membership in the parish.
3. In order to be considered a member of our parish for the purpose of tuition grants, it is expected that each family will attend Sunday Mass on a regular basis. This means, minimally, forty (40) weekends a year, allowing for vacations, weekends away and other reasons. This minimum in no way implies that it is acceptable to miss Mass on the other twelve weekends of the year.
4. We will gauge attendance at Sunday Mass through the use of parish offertory envelopes. These *must* be dropped in the collection baskets at Mass, *not mailed in*. If you donate to the parish on-line, a practice which is encouraged, your envelope should still be dropped in the basket at the Mass which you attend. This information will be used when considering tuition grants going forward and it will be taken most seriously.
5. This is not principally about money. However, the original intent behind granting five hundred dollars per student was the belief that parents would be attending Mass and contributing to the support of the parish, thereby doing their part. By and large, this seems to be no longer the case.
6. Regarding money, I would encourage every school family to support the parish financially in some way, as best they can. The people of the parish support the school financially, and it seems only proper that registered parish families who have children in the school should support the parish at least with **their physical presence** and, if possible, their offertory contributions.