

## Letter: Church losing parishioners over way it closing OLP

Friday, February 25, 2005

(Editor's Note: The following is another open letter sent to Archbishop O'Malley.)

Dear Archbishop,

I am writing to you because I am concerned and disappointed with your decision regarding the Our Lady of the Presentation School in Brighton.

As a former student of that school, I know firsthand the quality of education that the children receive, the spirit of commitment to community that the school instills and the overwhelming sense of loss that the community feels.

I, like most of the adults that attended that school, am and always have been a community activist and volunteer. Something that I learned in elementary school. The Our Lady of the Presentation School has earned its reputation of excellence.

Everyone's life is like a short story. Every day, we enter into a new chapter of ours or someone else's life. We meet new people and a new chapter, or story, begins. The Church resembles a history book, with lessons to be taught and facts to be learned. But history doesn't always have to repeat itself.

Right now, you have the opportunity to write a new chapter in a book that is presently riddled with mistrust, disappointment and shame. You have an opportunity to reach out to the needs of a dedicated, passionate, Catholic community and help to heal the past and present wounds that have been inflicted upon them by their beloved Church, by allowing them to keep their community united, through the preservation of their community school.

The Church has created a lack of trust among all Catholics, and you have lost faithful parishioners because of the Church's insensitive need for control.

The community is offering to purchase this school and enhance the community in general by creating the partnership of a school and community center. The Church can place its business offices anywhere - it's just a business office, but you cannot replace the heart, soul and spirit of a community, especially when the center core of this energy is the very space in which you plan on overtaking and occupying.

There is an entire unoccupied building at the St. Gabriel's Parish in Brighton where your offices could be housed. If it is in need of repairs, you have an in-house maintenance staff at the Caritas Medical Center, at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, that is quite capable of renovation and repair work. This site is available, easily accessible by car and public transportation, and provides private parking.

You have a choice here. You have an opportunity to make the fair and Christian decision of allowing the Brighton community to purchase the Our Lady of the Presentation School. The Church needs the money - the community needs the school.

Please do not make the next chapter of this story the last chapter that the Catholic community will be able to tolerate. Create a new chapter and legacy of trust, compassion and caring for the needs of this and every Catholic community.

Please make the right choice and reconsider your decision concerning the Our Lady of the Presentation Elementary School.

Joan Pasquale

Allston

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