DATE: January 7, 2020

RE: Closing of Our Lady of Mercy School, Hicksville

FROM: Sean P. Dolan, Director of Communications

We are deeply saddened by the announced closing of Our Lady of Mercy School, Hicksville. Established by the Sisters of Mercy nearly sixty years ago, this closing is a great loss to the students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff and volunteers who have served the school so faithfully during its history. The school will close at the conclusion of the current 2019-2020 school year.

Unfortunately, the drop in enrollment and the decline in tuition income makes the goal of providing a quality education to nurture and develop students academically, emotionally and spiritually, unsustainable. From the 2012-13 school year to the 2019-20 school year, Our Lady of Mercy School has seen enrollment decrease 72% from 368 students to 104 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Over the same period, Our Lady of Mercy has seen enrollment decrease 61% from 469 students to 181 students in Nursery through eighth grade.

As enrollment has declined, the income from tuition and fundraising has also decreased, and the amount of parish and diocesan contribution has increased dramatically. From the 2012-13 school year through the 2018-19 school year, the parish has provided a total of $2.36 million in operating support and the Diocese of Rockville Centre has provided almost $500,000 in additional core contribution. The parish subsidy for the 2018-19 school year was 52% of total parish collections. In the current 2019-20 school year, the parish is anticipated to provide at least $400,000 in operating subsidy and the diocese is expected to provide approximately $200,000 in core contribution. This level of financial dependence on the parish and diocese is not sustainable.

Students from Our Lady of Mercy will be welcomed into any Catholic elementary school in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. There are a number of neighboring parish Catholic elementary schools that are prepared to welcome Our Lady of Mercy students into their communities. These schools include: Holy Family School in Hicksville, St. Edward the Confessor School in Syosset, and St. Patrick's School in Huntington.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre has established a dedicated website for additional information on the closing of Our Lady of Mercy School (www.olmhicksville.com). A special hotline (516-280-4124) and dedicated email address education@drvc.org have also been established for comments and questions during this time.

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