

**QUESTION: SHOULD ST. MONICA PARISH  
INITIATE A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?  
A COMPILATION OF CONSIDERATIONS**

**Conducted by  
St. Monica School Steering Committee  
For St. Monica Parish and Its Pastoral Council**

**August 22, 2006**

**Saint Monica Parish  
Edmond, Oklahoma**

## **FOREWORD**

This study is an effort by a small committee assigned by our pastor to the task of investigating the possibility of a school to inform parishioners of its findings. The mission of St. Monica Catholic Church is “to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rooted in Scripture and our Catholic tradition and nurtured by the sacraments, we will strive to instill hope in the hearts of the hopeless, encourage trust in God for those who are searching for peace, and build a loving faith community to help one another along life's journey.” By praying to the Holy Spirit for guidance, the committee presents this effort to you, the parishioners of Saint Monica Parish, so that you might determine if a school is necessary and can effectively mesh with the parish mission.

**QUESTION: SHOULD ST. MONICA PARISH  
INITIATE A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?  
A COMPILATION OF CONSIDERATIONS**

**ABSTRACT**

This report to the Parishioners of St. Monica Parish was compiled by the ad hoc School Steering Committee through dialogue with the Catholic School Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent of Oklahoma City's Archdiocese, the Director of Stewardship and the Director of Development & Planned Giving for the Diocese of Wichita and a review of the literature. Its focus is on analyzing data and identifying the various aspects involved in opening a school at St. Monica Parish. It has addressed five broad questions:

- Why Catholic Education?
- How Will Stewardship Affect the Catholic School?
- What is Required to Start a Catholic School?
- What Are the School's Building Options?
- What Are the Financial Considerations of a Catholic School?

As expressed in Vatican literature, Catholic families should be guaranteed the right to see that their children receive the sort of education wished for them. We live in a world where public education remains neutral on the subject of religion and negative values frequently bombard our children. Knowledge acquired at St. Monica Catholic School will serve as a firm foundation empowering its children to make faith-based decisions, not only here and now, but also in their adult lives.

Total stewardship is the philosophy upon which St. Monica Parish was founded. Its families and children should receive continuing education so they can respond effectively and actively to the call to walk as Jesus did. Within this philosophical concept, Catholic education should be made

available to all families practicing stewardship, regardless of social or economic status, as a part of their stewardship commitment.

Advice from the Archdiocesan Catholic School Superintendent's office, schools within both the Diocese of Wichita and the archdiocese of Oklahoma City, recommend that the school start with only Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade. This due, in part, to start up costs and student enrollment numbers, but also due to the researched fact that parents are reluctant to pull their child(ren) from a school once enrolled.

If after careful study it is determined that a school is both feasible and strongly supported by the parish, then plans should get underway. The state of Oklahoma and the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has certain mandates related to the operation of a school. A School Advisory Council would address other planning considerations. The principal, teachers and volunteers should view their teaching as a fundamental duty to evangelize and realize that Catholic schools are truly different from public schools in both culture and mission.

Classroom space is not currently available on the church campus. Construction of the permanent education facility, now in its initial planning stages, will be very costly. With that in mind and because of the Archbishop's requirement that the parish be able to meet 50% of the cost of the entire school package, a temporary building seems necessary, if the parish is to initiate a school in the near future. Building a meeting-room facility that would meet the current need for evening and weekend meeting space could also serve as a school during the day. Expected construction completion is 6 to 8 months and current estimates are \$250,000.

This report also includes other considerations: anticipated enrollment; staff size and salaries; other expenses; and a discussion of financial stewardship or other sources of revenue giving insight as to how the parish might handle its education costs.

## INTRODUCTION

As a result of frequent inquiries by parishioners at St. Monica Parish, its Pastor assigned a small steering committee to investigate the possibility of opening a school for its children. In the spring of 2006 under the chair of Alicia Forth, six couples became involved in a data gathering process. These couples included Alicia and Shawn Forth, Ken and Kelly Hughes, Bob and Kim Copple, Nichole and Corey Lipps, Mindy and Alex Garcia, Amanda and Bryan Herrick and Emmet and Virginia Osgood. The Copples have relocated to Omaha, Nebraska, so they were unable to continue beyond the first few months' involvement. The goal was to research Catholic Schools in Oklahoma in an effort to investigate need, feasibility, costs, and models of best practice in an objective manner to ascertain both positive and negative sides to the issue.

This report is offered neither to endorse nor discourage the implementation of a school at St. Monica Parish. Rather, it should serve as a reference tool should the pastoral council and the parishioners elect to open a school for parish children.

The outline of the presentation's sequence follows these questions:

- I. Why Catholic Education?
- II. How Will Stewardship Affect the Catholic School?
- III. What Is Required to Start a Catholic School?
- IV. What Are the School's Building Options?
- V. What Are the Financial Considerations of a Catholic School?

## **I. Why Catholic Education?**

In an effort to become more informed, the St. Monica School Steering Subcommittee formed in Spring 2006 has considered various sources regarding Catholic Education over the past six months. It has reviewed Vatican Council II documents, papal encyclicals, and numerous other recent publications on Catholic schooling. The subcommittee has consulted various principals, priests, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. In addition, the team consulted and maintains an on-going dialogue with the Catholic School Superintendent, the Director of Stewardship and the Director of Development & Planned Giving for the Diocese of Wichita. Lastly, the subcommittee analyzed data, strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Pope John Paul II spent much of his papacy focusing on Catholic education. Although the following quotes are from twenty years ago, the messages are timeless. The subcommittee was deeply inspired by the following passages.

During his 1987 visit to the United States, Pope John Paul II emphasized the Second Vatican Council's viewpoint on Catholic Education as it pertains to the responsibility of the family:

Permit me, brothers and sisters, to mention briefly something that is of special concern to the Church. I refer to the rights and duties of parents in the education of their children. The Second Vatican Council clearly enunciated the Church's position: 'Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children' (Declaration on Christian Education). In comparison with the educational role of all others, their role is primary; it is also irreplaceable and inalienable. (Origins, p. 280)

Pope John Paul II later stated, "Community is at the heart of all Catholic Education, not simply as a concept to be taught, but as a reality to be lived. In its deepest Christian sense, community is a sharing in the life of the Blessed Trinity." (Origins, p. 281) A third passage states:

Catholic schools are no less zealous than other schools in the promotion of culture and in the human formation of young people. It is, however, the special function of Catholic Schools to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by the spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel. It enables young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in the new life which has been given to them at baptism. (II Vatican, Section 8).

In today's society where the teaching of values is considered taboo, education in public institutions has "a noticeable tendency to reduce education to its purely technical and practical aspects." Public schools seem to be following a trend that takes a "step back into a supposed neutrality. . . To claim neutrality for schools signifies in practice, more times than not, banning all reference to religion. . ." The Catholic school must overcome the misunderstandings of public education's claim to neutrality. (Congregation for Catholic Education) Pope John Paul II succinctly wrote that schools cannot be limited to simply offering neutral ideas in the various branches of knowledge. Schools must help children "look in the right direction for the *meaning of life*." (Angelus address)

It seems society is out of control. Through peer groups and media, children today are being bombarded with negative values. Now more than ever, children should be surrounded by Christian attitudes and principles. One of the most significant elements of Catholic education stems from the combination of culture and faith.

Knowledge set in the context of faith becomes wisdom and life vision. The endeavor to interweave reason and faith, which has become the heart of individual subjects, makes for unity, articulation and coordination, bringing forth what is learned in school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history. . . The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered." (Congregation for Catholic Education)

The presence of a Catholic School, just as a public school, fulfills a role to teach the children of the community. However, families must remember that a Catholic school presence guarantees the "freedom and right for families to see that their children receive the sort of education they wish for

them . . . The work of a Catholic school is irreplaceable and the investment of human material resources in the school becomes a prophetic choice". (ibid)

If St. Monica Parish decides to build a school it should provide the children with the knowledge that they need in an atmosphere that enables and encourages them to draw closer to Jesus. The school should strive to educate children in heart, mind and spirit where Christian values are the cornerstone. It should strive to develop and nurture the spiritual life of each child. This can be achieved through religious education throughout the curriculum, a sense of positive self-worth, and an atmosphere of charity, service, prayer and personal moral responsibility, which reinforces the values instilled in the home. A quality learning environment should be provided where its students are encouraged to reach their fullest potential while discovering and developing their individual personal gifts.

The greatest hope of the subcommittee is that upon graduation, students shall be well-prepared spiritually, academically, and personally to succeed in their future life endeavors.

## **II. How Will Stewardship Affect the Catholic School?**

St. Monica Church was founded in 1993 as a full stewardship parish. At the time of the blessing by Archbishop Beltran, he was told that a school would be opened in the future. Along with the same philosophy the parish was founded on, it would be a stewardship-based school. In a recent visit with Sister Catherine Powers, Superintendent of Archdiocese of Oklahoma Catholic Schools, it was relayed that the archbishop and she are delighted with the possibility of a school opening and intrigued by the stewardship concept.

Catholic education has been available for many generations regardless of race, religion or financial status. In earlier years, the religious orders would charge tuition only to the more affluent who attended the academies. This allowed the opportunity of a Catholic education to the less fortunate. The community supported the parish and school.

This was practiced until the mid-1960s when changes in American society affected the financing of the parish schools. There was a decline in men and women choosing the religious life as a vocation which resulted in a need to hire teachers and pay them a salary to support their families. Also, the class sizes were limited which required additional teachers and resources.

Today Catholic schools are funded mainly through tuition, parish support and fund-raisers. Because some schools struggle to meet their budgets, some people believe tuition should increase. In situations where tuitions are frequently on the rise close monitoring is necessary to avoid the potential of serving only those who can afford the education. The Church must always keep in mind the mission to serve all.

Discrimination can occur with a fixed-tuition rate when leaders fail to realize that some families can pay a higher rate while other families can only afford a modest rate. With a fixed-tuition rate for all students, it does not encourage some families to bear a higher percentage of the true cost of educating their child(ren). Additionally, it could turn away those students who may be in most need of

a Catholic education. There seems to be a mentality that once the tuition has been paid, the obligation of parents and students to the school ends. A true spirit of stewardship is not practiced in these situations.

In November 1990, the Catholic bishops of the United States wrote their statement on Catholic schools entitled *In Support of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. In this statement bishops spoke of their continued support of Catholic education and the need for the entire community to be responsible stewards. The statement reaffirmed the belief that Catholic schools are the most effective means available to the Church for educating its youth in the faith. Therefore, Catholics are all called to carry out this most important mission of the Church.

The American Catholic bishops presented their teaching on stewardship in their pastoral letter entitled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* in November 1992. In it, bishops stressed stewardship as a response to the call to discipleship given at the time of Baptism. A continuous conversion of hearts and minds in understanding this call is required. Stewardship focuses only secondarily on raising needed funds, but primarily concentrates on a call to live as the disciples of Jesus whose life was spent in the service of others.

Members of the St. Monica school steering committee were privileged to meet with Dan Loughman, Director of Stewardship of the Catholic Diocese of Wichita. Stewardship as a way of life has been the accepted practice of Wichita's Catholics for the last 20 years. Through their individualized sharing of the God-given gifts, they are able to continue in the ministries of the Church. Visiting with the group, Loughman shared the ways in which the individual churches and the diocese as a whole actively participate in serving the needs of the parish, the community and the universal Church.

Active participation in the life of the church is the key element. It begins in the celebration of the Eucharist through attending mass every Sunday. Next, individuals are encouraged to share his or

her gifts by renewing their commitment in time and talent sharing each year. They must realize that Christ's disciples are called to build up the Kingdom of God. A stewardship-based school at St. Monica would be yet another ministry to build God's Kingdom. Prayer and discernment can lead to an acknowledgement of each person's gifts and an understanding of how they can be shared. Continued education directed toward stewardship will support people on their journey as well. Finally, sacrificial giving of resources from all families through tithing sustains and maintains the ministries of the church.

The Diocese of Wichita asks its families to tithe 8% to the church and 2% to other charities. Each parish, in turn, gives a percentage to the diocese rather than asking parishioners to donate directly to diocesan appeals. At St. Monica parishioners are asked to donate 5% to the parish plus 1% going directly to the Archdiocesan Fund. The remaining 4% should be donated to a charity of the donor's personal choice. Because St. Monica is growing both in size and ministries and has many needs, parishioners will soon be asked to step up their giving to follow a plan similar to Wichita's model.

Stewardship as a way of life is a response to the call to walk as Jesus did. Serving others with grateful hearts helps one to see the face of Jesus in everyone he/she meets. A stewardship school would serve as an additional ministry of St. Monica Church, yet another way to build up the kingdom of God. Let it begin today.

### **III. What Is Required to Start a School?**

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City operate within parameters and according to regulations established by the archdiocese and the state of Oklahoma. For information concerning the requirements of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, the school steering committee contacted Sr. Catherine Powers, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese, and Chris Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese.

The most important requirement that Sr. Catherine discussed is that the parish decide if a school is both wanted and feasible – to actually quantify parishioner interest and student enrollment potential. A survey should be conducted to give all parish members the opportunity to voice their opinions and thereby determine if sufficient willingness and commitment is present to support the school project. Because schools must rely heavily on volunteers it must also be determined if parishioners are willing to cooperate.

Should St. Monica parishioners determine that a school is in the best interest of the parish as a whole, it would have to then decide which grades to offer. Sr. Catherine advised starting initially with Pre-K through first grade. Parishioners are cautioned against opening a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at the onset unless there is adequate enrollment to support it. Once students start a school, parents are reluctant to place the child in a new environment. Of course, if pre-enrollment is overwhelmingly successful or surpasses initial projections, additional grade levels could be added. Starting children early in a Pre-K program will serve as a feeder to promote the school's student base. By adding a grade each year the school should eventually offer grades through eight because of cultural struggles 12 and 13 year old students face when placed in an environment with freshmen in high school. (Powers)

Another argument to support retaining 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the elementary school environment comes from Yecke and Finn. They purport that “abundant evidence indicates that the seeds that produce high school failure are sown in the 5-8<sup>th</sup> grades” They further state:

Today's middle schools have succumbed to a concept of "middle schoolism" in which a strong academic curriculum is traded for one that focuses more on emotional and social development, and less on learning the basics. And the achievement data reflects "middle schoolism's" results. In 1999, U.S. eighth graders scored nine points below average on the TIMSS assessment of math. What's more, these same eighth graders had outperformed the average by 28 points as fourth graders in 1995!

Finally, if the parish study reflects positively on the school undertaking, a formal written request must be submitted to the Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools by January 1, stating the intent to open a school in August of that same year.

The written request will seek permission from the Archdiocesan office and will include precise documentation related to parish capital, building plus startup costs, and salaries. Parish on-hand capital should cover at least half of these combined costs. Because the Archbishop's current policy strictly adheres to the guidelines that the parish carries the entire burden of the school debt, the request should further stipulate how the remaining school-establishment debt will be satisfied within five years. If, after the superintendent reviews the school document proposal, it is seen in a positive light, the request will then be submitted to the Archbishop for final approval. Once approved, the project can proceed.

Next, the formation of a school Advisory Council should begin. It should consist of the pastor, principal and at least four other elected, appointed (or a combination of appointed and elected) individuals who are not employees of the parish. This council is then in-serviced by the Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools so it can effectively work in conjunction with the parish pastoral and finance councils. The Advisory Council functions generally include recommending policies, preparing a budget, and working with the principal in long-range planning for the school.

A search committee must be established to locate a candidate for principal. After candidates are identified and before any contract can be negotiated, individuals must be interviewed by the

Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools who will explain Archdiocesan policies, job descriptions, and general contract expectations. If a candidate is acceptable to the Superintendent, the specific contract terms can be negotiated.

If it is determined that the school is to open with only the minimal grades, it is possible that the principal could serve as half-time administrator and half-time teacher. In this case, the principal/teacher could function with only provisional administrator certification. Provisional certification, often granted under the proviso that the certified teacher can meet administrative credentialing by the end of the third year of combined service, is relatively common.

The new principal, under the pastor's guidelines, then becomes responsible for acquiring a staff and setting the curriculum. Teachers must be state certified and principals must have state administrator certification. The number of teachers needed will be based upon the anticipated enrollment derived from completed surveys and from those parents who have expressed an interest by making a monetary deposit.

In a document entitled *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* it is stated that today's students often lack reliable role models to guide them. Therefore, Catholic schools should employ administrative and teaching professionals who are strong Catholics who support Catholic teachings and doctrines. They must view their teaching as a fundamental duty to evangelize and understand that Catholic schools are different both in culture and mission from public schools. Once hired, staff must fully participate in the Archdiocesan teacher formation program.

Accreditation is a concern when considering a school. Accreditation application will occur at the earliest possible opportunity and the school staff should strive diligently to meet all accreditation requirements and licensing requirements and standards that are established by the Oklahoma Board of Education, the Oklahoma Commission for Private School and the Archdiocesan Catholic School Office.

Catholic schools in Oklahoma historically have left the issue of transportation to the parents. A school lunch program is not mandatory but will be referred to the school's Advisory Council for ruling. A cafeteria and kitchen are already in place if the decision calls for a lunch program.

Special education needs usually can be met through the local public school system. Both the Edmond and the Deer Creek Public School systems that serve children in the geographical boundaries of St. Monica Parish have adequate special education programs.

Because St. Monica School will be based on the parish stewardship philosophy, it must be available to all families practicing stewardship, regardless of social or economic status. Because economic stability is a major concern in determining the feasibility of a school, the final two sections of this paper are dedicated to building needs and financial considerations.

#### **IV. What Are the School's Building Options?**

Although many parishioners have expressed a desire for a school, specific needs for an education building to house the school classes have not yet been identified. A pending survey is expected to give more accurate indication of grades to be considered and when the school should be implemented.

In a recent visit between Archdiocese of Oklahoma City's Superintendent of Schools, Sister Catherine Powers and school steering committee members, it was recommended that the school should start with only a few grades, adding one grade per year consistently until needs were satisfied. Sr. Catherine encouraged the committee initially to open with Pre-K, all day kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She explained that because public schools have initiated Pre-K programs and these often serve as a feeder for the schools' student-base, it would be wise for St. Monica Parish to include Pre-K.

However, if there is to be any school with even minimal grades, it is imperative that classrooms be built prior to its start-up. Meeting space at Saint Monica is already woefully inadequate, scheduling of meetings for religious education and the parishes' myriad organizations often results in double booking or meeting in cramped quarters. There certainly is no room in the present facility to satisfy school needs or needs of growing parishioner groups.

Since the origin of the parish the Saint Monica Building Committee has been planning for various phases of construction for the parish. Phases one and two have already been completed with the erection of the parish center and the church. Phase three consisted of a tiered plan that was to include a three-story school building that would connect to the existing parish center. Tier one called for constructing the three floors and finishing only the first floor; tier two provided for completion of floors 2 and 3; and finally in tier three a gymnasium would be added.

Architect Steve Olsen and the construction committee have created some initial plans but these are still in the formative stage. A construction estimate offered by the architect in early 2005 was

\$2,600,000 to complete the three story shell and first floor build-out. Special rooms, a commons room, playgrounds, gymnasium and furnishings were not included in that estimate. That dollar figure obviously is invalid today because of rising construction costs including raw materials and labor. The current total cost of all three tiers is predicted by some to be in the \$6-10 million dollar range.

The initial drawings have been reviewed briefly by Sister Catherine. She has indicated the building plans will require some more modification to satisfy various school building and restroom specifications plus fire code requirements.

With projected parish growth, frequent requests by St. Monica families of school age children and Archbishop Eusebius Beltran's interest in a school at Saint Monica, it seems imprudent to wait until the building of phase three can be completed or even partially completed. Certainly planning for a multi-faceted education facility will require a great deal of input from a number of experts and planning of that magnitude cannot be rushed. Furthermore, actual construction will likely take 18 months or more from groundbreaking to completion. Therefore, if a school is to open at Saint Monica Parish in the near future, it seems necessary to implement an option that would provide more immediate access to a school facility.

Many schools in the Edmond area have experienced rapid growth and those schools have frequently used temporary buildings. The concept of temporary buildings has been studied by the school steering committee. The committee looked at both used temporary buildings that could be retrofitted and new temporary buildings.

Figures from 1996 for a portable building to house one class with a restroom indicated a cost of \$48,000. A larger portable capable of serving as two classrooms with restrooms was \$65,000. In 2001, another parish was given three portable buildings totaling 3,600 sq. feet. Moving the donated buildings seven miles, connecting to utilities and updating to meet city codes was over \$68,000. Estimates today are nearly double those figures.

School steering committee members agreed that although the initial installation would be quick, the cost is substantial, construction is substandard, safety is questionable, and appearance is not aesthetically pleasing. Additionally, it was determined that there would be tear down costs upon completion of phase three. Other ideas for a quick answer to the school facility emerged: erecting modular buildings or building a school facility that could be converted later into a school gymnasium. Eventually these ideas too were discarded, again because of sub-standard construction or retrofitting costs.

Because space for meeting rooms is badly needed now and the school, if implemented, will need space for at least a small number of grades, the committee recommends that permanent meeting space be built as quickly as possible. So the new construction does not interfere with the grand scheme of the building phases, it is suggested that the meeting space be built so that it adjoins the existing storage/youth building. Attaching a 5,000 square foot annex to the east wall of said building would provide for five meeting rooms of 700 sq. feet each (approximately 30% larger than the St. Michael Room) and an office/reception area. These rooms could be used for school classrooms during the day and for meeting areas or RE classrooms after school hours until the school's student body and parish revenue grow adequately to begin actual construction of phase three.

By attaching the annex to the existing building, an existing wall and parking lot could be shared. Students could easily walk on pavement to the chapel or church for prayer, and to the parish hall for assemblies or cafeteria service.

A preliminary drawing has been completed. It proposes that each meeting room be equipped with an enclosed handicap-accessible restroom (toilet and lavatory) and an additional wash basin and/or water fountain with classroom access. Each room would have its own separate air conditioning/heating unit. This would allow individual meeting rooms to be used without heating and cooling the entire building. Utilities to the existing building are already in place, connecting to those

existing lines should be relatively simple and inexpensive. It will be necessary to meet Edmond's fire codes and adjacent playground fencing might be wise if the student body is very young.

An estimate of \$85,000 was given for the building's floor and insulated shell; bricking for the structure is projected at \$35,000. The air conditioning/heating units are expected to cost \$1,400 per room ( $\$1,400 \times 6 = \$8,400.00$ ). A sprinkling system designed to meet fire codes is estimated at \$25,000. Though final cost figures are incomplete at the date of this report, it is probable that the bricked, metal-frame structure as currently planned could be completed for \$250,000 (plus furnishings – costs are noted in next section of this paper) with construction time projected to take six to eight months.

Should, after input from parishioners-at-large, the Parish Council determine that a school is not feasible in the near future; the building can be still fully utilized. It will satisfy current needs for religious education classes and provide meeting space for other parish meeting needs. If a school opening is determined and its growth meets expectations, construction on the large education complex can begin. Once the school moves to the enlarged complex, the initial building's use can return to serving as a meeting facility to serve RE classes, parish committees, and other organization.

## V. What Are the Financial Considerations of a Catholic School?

The following financial study attempts to estimate the cost to the parish of operating a Catholic school and discusses how the parish may cover these costs. The first step in the process was to identify the following key factors:

- What grade levels would be offered?
- What is the anticipated enrollment?
- What size staff would be needed?
- What would salaries be?
- What other expenses are there?
- Is the parish financial stewardship adequate to cover these costs?
- If not, what would be required to meet the cost of a school?
- What are other possible sources of revenue?

This study estimates operating costs and revenue for starting a Catholic school comprised of pre-school (age 4) through 1<sup>st</sup> grade, with the addition of one grade per year until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level is achieved. This decision was based on the recommendation of Sr. Catherine Powers, the Superintendent of Catholic schools for the Oklahoma City diocese. This study does not address Catholic high school because Bishop McGuinness High School is reasonably nearby and there is a significant increase in cost associated with the facilities required for a high school such as a science lab, athletic facilities, etc.

Possible St. Monica's enrollment was determined from parish records of registered children as of April 2006. The following chart displays this information by age group and uses these numbers to show potential enrollment in percentages of total children.

<u>Potential St. Monica's Enrollment</u>						
<u>Age</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>20%</u>	<b>25%</b>	<u>30%</u>	<u>40%</u>
4	Pre-K	43	7	<b>11</b>	13	17
5	K	55	11	<b>14</b>	17	22
6	1 <sup>st</sup>	62	12	<b>16</b>	19	25
7	2 <sup>nd</sup>	60	12	<b>15</b>	18	24
8	3 <sup>rd</sup>	83	17	<b>21</b>	25	33
9	4 <sup>th</sup>	57	11	<b>14</b>	17	23
10	5 <sup>th</sup>	53	11	<b>13</b>	16	21
11	6 <sup>th</sup>	72	14	<b>18</b>	22	29
12	7 <sup>th</sup>	57	11	<b>14</b>	17	23
13	8 <sup>th*</sup>	60	12	<b>15</b>	18	24

The committee employed a conservative participation rate of 25% to project anticipated St. Monica's enrollment. If 25% of registered children enrolled, there would be 11 pre-school students, 14 kindergartners, and 126 students in grades one through eight; a total enrollment of 151 children.

In determining staffing needs, the committee considered the current State of Oklahoma regulations that specify preferred and maximum teacher/student ratios. The teacher/student ratio for four-year-olds is two adults to 20 children. Pre-school can be scheduled for either two 2 ½ hour sessions per day for each age group, or for one all-day five-hour session. The maximum ratio for kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is one teacher to 20 children with a maximum of 29 children with an aide. The maximum ratio for 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade is 1 to 25.

Based on 25% parish enrollment, St. Monica's school would need two pre-school teachers and one teacher for each of K-8 for a total of 9 teachers. Teacher aides, if needed, would be sought from volunteers. Thus, a paid teaching staff of 11 is anticipated for a pre-school through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. A principal will also be required and should be hired in January of the school year prior to the August opening of the school to assist with teacher and curriculum selection. It is anticipated that while the school is small, a volunteer secretary would be used with a full time secretary being added in future years. Additionally, future years would require the addition of a librarian, bringing the staff total to 14.

Staff salaries should be competitive with public schools but do not have to match them.

Projected teacher salaries in this study are based on entry-level salaries for State certified teachers in the Edmond Public Schools. For the 2005/2006 school year, new teachers are paid \$29,220 yearly with average salaries of approximately \$33,500. Catholic schools typically pay teachers 15% - 20% less than public schools, so an average salary of \$28,500 will be used for this study. Part-time pre-school teachers should earn \$8,500 per year; the principal's salary is estimated at \$45,000. During the first years of operation, the principal can also serve as a part-time teacher, reducing the need by one.

**First Year Salary Expense**

<u>Staff</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Expense</u>
Pre-School Teachers	1	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,500
K-8 Teachers/Librarian	2	\$28,500	\$ 57,000
Principal	1	\$45,000	\$ 45,000
Secretary	<u>0</u>	\$18,000	<u>\$ 0</u>
Total Salary	4		\$ 110,500

**Salary Expense – Fully Operational School**

<u>Staff</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Expense</u>
Pre-School Teachers	2	\$ 8,500	\$ 17,000
K-8 Teachers/Librarian	10	\$28,500	\$ 285,000
Principal	1	\$45,000	\$ 45,000
Secretary	<u>1</u>	\$18,000	<u>\$ 18,000</u>
Total Salary	14		\$ 365,000

In addition to salaries, other staff expenses include Social Security (FICA) contributions, worker's compensation insurance, health and accident insurance, and retirement plan contributions. These expenses are illustrated in the chart below.

Note: FICA is computed at 7.51% of annual salary; worker's compensation is estimated at \$200 per employee per year; health and accident insurance is provided for full-time employees only and costs \$6,025 per year; retirement plan benefits are provided only for full-time employees and the cost is computed at 4% of annual salary.

**First Year Other Staff Expenses**

<u>Item</u>	<u># Staff</u>	<u>Expense</u>
FICA	4	\$ 8,300
Worker's Compensation	4	800
Health & Accident Insurance	3	18,075
Retirement Plan	3	<u>4,080</u>
Total Other Staff Expenses		\$ 31,255

**Other Staff Expenses – Fully Operational School**

<u>Item</u>	<u># Staff</u>	<u>Expense</u>
FICA	14	\$ 27,415
Worker's Compensation	14	2,800
Health & Accident Insurance	12	72,300
Retirement Plan	12	<u>13,920</u>
Total Other Staff Expenses		\$116,435

In addition to staff expenses, the most significant first year expense associated with starting a new school will be a new facility for classrooms. As discussed in the previous section of this report, the committee estimates a facility to start the school would cost \$250,000 with significantly more expense in future years to build the permanent school facility. Because the church requires additional meeting space, which the temporary school would provide, this is not considered a cost incremental to opening a school. However, it should be noted that the future cost to build a permanent school facility would be significant. Other major cost items include text books, utilities, janitorial service, and supplies. Estimates for these costs are very broad at this time. More detailed estimates of these costs should be made in the final budgeting process.

**First Year Operating Expenses**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Expense</u>
Text Books	\$ 3,000
Utilities	10,000
Janitorial	10,000
Supplies	<u>5,000</u>
	\$28,000

To furnish the classroom properly would increase first-year costs. Representative prices for tables, desks, and chairs were obtained from Court and Virgo, the vendors used by Edmond Public

Schools. Kindergarten tables cost \$140; suitable chairs are \$20. A 15” desk for grades one through five cost \$40. A teacher’s desk with a double pedestal and radius sides with rubber molding costs \$315; the chair is \$118. The Court representative estimated a 50% discount from retail for private schools. The purchase of desks and chairs for upper grades can be delayed until additional grades are opened in future years.

**First Year Furniture Expense**

<u>Item</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Expense</u>
Kindergarten Table	4	\$140	\$ 560
Chairs	40	\$ 20	\$ 800
Student Desk	20	\$ 40	\$ 800
Teacher’s Desk	3	\$315	\$ 945
Teacher’s Chair	3	\$118	<u>\$ 354</u>
			\$ 3,459

**Additional Furniture Expense Each Year**

<u>Item</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Expense</u>
Chairs	25	\$ 20	\$ 500
Student Desk	25	\$ 40	\$ 1,000
Teacher’s Desk	1	\$315	\$ 315
Teacher’s Chair	1	\$118	<u>\$ 118</u>
			\$ 1,933

Having determined anticipated expenses for a pre-school through eighth grade Catholic school, the next consideration is anticipated revenue to meet these expenses.

There are several options for providing revenue for a Catholic school. The most common in the Diocese is tuition; however, the committee did not consider tuition consistent with the total stewardship model on which St. Monica’s was founded. In June, members of the committee visited the Wichita diocese to better understand how they provide Catholic education under the total stewardship model. The Wichita diocese asks all parishioners to support the school by tithing 8% of annual salary to the church. Operating a school in a stewardship parish requires the commitment of all parishioners and provides benefit to the entire parish.

No specific financial commitment is required of parents of children attending the school. There is, however, a contract signed between the school and parents, which details the estimated cost of educating their child(ren). This contract asks that parents fully participate in parish life including the gift of their time, talent, and treasure. Stewardship, in best-case scenarios, is based on trust, and in that spirit of trust, no financial records are requested. Another consideration would be one similar to that at St. Eugene's Catholic School in Oklahoma City, in which a review of financial records is required and a once-a-year stewardship status meeting occurs with the pastor and/or board.

Assuming St. Monica's increases the requested tithe of all parishioners from 5% to 6% in the next year, 20% more than the current request, and that this results in a 15% increase in weekly giving, \$155,000 would be added to church collections for the support of the Catholic School. Following is a summary of the first year budget for St. Monica's Catholic School based on the areas discussed above.

<b>Estimated First Year Operating Budget</b>	
<u>Expense Item</u>	<u>First Year</u>
Salaries	\$ 110,500
Other Staff Expenses	31,255
Other Operating Expenses	28,000
Furniture*	<u>3,459</u>
	\$ 173,214
Estimated Increase in Tithe	<u>\$ 155,000</u>
Shortfall	(\$ 18,214)

\* Additional furniture cost of \$1,933 would be incurred each year to add an additional grade until the school is fully functional.

After the first year of operation, one grade would be added per year until the school was comprised of pre-K through 8th grade. The requested tithe would also be increased until the request reaches 7% - 8%. Assuming an 8% requested tithe, 60% more than the current request, and that this results in a 40% increase in weekly giving, \$414,000 would be added to the collections for the support of the school on an ongoing basis. Following is a summary of the annual budget, before consideration for payment on any debt used to finance the future permanent school facility.

**Estimated Annual Operating Budget**

<u>Expense Item</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
Salaries	\$ 365,000
Other Staff Expenses	114,335
Other Operating Expenses	<u>40,000</u>
	\$ 519,335
Estimated Increase in Tithe	<u>\$ 414,000</u>
Difference	(\$105,335)

Funding to subsidize this shortfall would have to be taken from the existing collections. Subsidies currently paid from parish revenue as tuition to nearby Archdiocesan schools would diminish as student enrollment and grades increase at St. Monica School. This would reduce the shortfall indicated above, but it is difficult to estimate its overall impact until enrollment numbers are more certain.

Within the stewardship model, fundraising to provide additional financial support for the school is discouraged, but several stewardship schools run an annual appeal to provide additional funding and they have utilized capital campaigns to provide funding for large projects such as building a new facility.

Parish subsidizing seems to be a way of life with Catholic schools. The amount of subsidy provided to Catholic schools in stewardship parishes is less evident as all cost of the school is taken from weekly collections. However, from discussion with representatives of two parishes in the Wichita diocese, it is widely accepted that support of the school reduces funds available to other parish ministries. At St. Francis of Assisi in Wichita, a stewardship parish since 1970, 40% - 50% of parish budget is consumed by the parish elementary school. Furthermore, they estimate that only 75% of the school funds are donated by families with school-aged children, with remaining parishioners generously subsidizing the remaining cost of the school.

As the members of St. Monica's gradually embrace the concept of stewardship and sacrificial giving, their generosity will grow. It could take several years for these concepts to be widely accepted,

but as conviction increases in each member, so will spiritual strength in the community, and with that the ability and desire to serve more needs.

## Summary

This information was compiled by the ad hoc School Steering Committee through dialogue with the Catholic School Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent of Oklahoma City's Archdiocese, the Director of Stewardship and the Director of Development & Planned Giving for the Diocese of Wichita and a review of the literature. The committee has focused on analyzing data and identifying the various aspects involved in opening a school at St. Monica Parish. It addressed five broad questions:

- Why Catholic Education?
- How Will Stewardship Affect the Catholic School?
- What is Required to Start a Catholic School?
- What Are the School's Building Options?
- What Are the Financial Considerations of a Catholic School?

Vatican literature expresses that Catholic families should be guaranteed the right to see that their children receive the sort of education wished for them. We live in a world where public education remains neutral on the subject of religion and children are bombarded with negative values. To enable its children to make faith-based decisions, not only here and now, but in their adult lives.

Because Saint Monica parish is based on a philosophy of total stewardship, families and children should receive continuing education so they can effectively and actively respond to the call to walk as Jesus did. Within this philosophical concept Catholic education should be made available to all families practicing stewardship, regardless of social or economic status, as a part of their stewardship commitment.

If after careful study it is determined that a school is feasible and strongly supported by the parish, then plans should get underway. The state of Oklahoma and the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has certain mandates that must be adhered to in the operation of a school. Other planning considerations would be addressed by a School Advisory Council. The principal, teachers and volunteers should view their teaching as

a fundamental duty to evangelize and realize that Catholic schools are truly different from public schools both in culture and mission.

Schoolrooms are not currently available on the church campus. Construction of a permanent education facility will be costly. Because of the Archbishop's requirement that the parish be able to meet 50% of the cost of the entire school package, a temporary building seems necessary upon initiation of the school.

Other considerations including grade level offerings, anticipated enrollment, staff size and salaries and other expenses have been presented. A discussion of financial stewardship and other sources of revenue are offered to give insight to how the parish might handle these education costs.

The committee trusts that readers of this report realize its sincere effort to compile pertinent and necessary information. It hopes that this document will assist the Pastoral Council and parishioners in this decision-making endeavor. This subject will require prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit to discern what is right for St. Monica parish.

## Bibliography

*Address to Teachers*, Pope John Paul II, Origins, Vol. 17, October 8, 1987, p.280-81.

*Angelus Address*, Pope John Paul II, September 13, 1998

*Catholic Education: A Matter of Choice*, The Catholic Parish of St. John the Baptist, Edmond, OK, November 1988

*Catholic from the Inside Out*, The Core Group. Garden & Wall Publishers, New York. 2003

*Declaration on Christian Education*, II Vatican, Section 8.

*In Support of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. Catholic Bishops of the United States, November 1990

*Mayhem in the Middle: How middle schools have failed America, and how to make them work*, Cheri Pierson Yecke and Charles E. Finn, Jr., Fordham Institute, 2005

*Opening a New Catholic School, A Series of Case Studies*, Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D., Editor, 1997.

Personal Interview with Daniel L. Loughman, Catholic Diocese of Wichita, Wichita, KS, June 23, 2006

Personal Interview with Michael Wescott, Catholic Diocese of Wichita, Wichita, KS, June 23, 2006

Personal Interview with Sister Catherine Powers, Superintendent of Archdiocese of Oklahoma Catholic Schools and Chris Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Oklahoma City Catholic Schools, at St. Monica Church, Edmond, OK, May 31, 2006.

*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, Catholic Bishops of the United States, November 1992.

*Stewardship and the Catholic School Tuition Program*, Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D., Kathleen C. Collins, SFCC, Department of Elementary Schools, National Catholic Educational Association, December 1996

Telephone Interview with Bob Voroли, Superintendent of Schools, Catholic Diocese of Wichita, Wichita, KS, June, 2006

*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Congregation for Catholic Education, <http://www.vatican>