



Diocese of Joliet

Office of the Bishop

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April 30, 2009

Statement of Bishop J. Peter Sartain, Bishop of Joliet, regarding the closing of Driscoll Catholic High School

Many people have been saddened by the decision of the Christian Brothers to close Driscoll Catholic High School at the end of this school year. Current students and their families, faculty, staff, and alumni are all affected by this news, and to them I extend my prayers and concern. I know that the Christian Brothers agonized over their decision, because they have been Catholic educators for three centuries and have overseen a fine educational tradition at Driscoll Catholic for 43 years. It is never easy to contemplate, much less make the decision that a school must close its doors. To all those saddened by the closing of the school I add myself, our Superintendent of Schools, and the entire community of the Diocese of Joliet.

During a public meeting which followed immediately upon the announcement of their decision to close Driscoll Catholic High School, the Christian Brothers agreed to allow an ad hoc group to study and then propose comprehensive steps to attempt to keep the school open and make it viable into the future. After intense study of that proposal, made to them last week, the Brothers concluded and then announced on April 28 that they must uphold their earlier decision.

Upon request I met with the ad hoc group on April 30 and discussed in detail their proposals that the Diocese of Joliet assume responsibility for the school. After studying their proposals in depth and reviewing the Christian Brothers' rationale for their decision, I came to the same conclusion as the Christian Brothers. The Diocese is not in a position to assume responsibility for the school, either by itself or by means of a not-for-profit corporation.

In recent weeks a large number of people have worked extremely hard to show their support of Driscoll Catholic High School, their gratitude for the school's impact on their lives, and their commitment to work hard for the good of the school in the future. I am deeply grateful for their enthusiastic work and dedication and the spirit of love they have shown for their alma mater. The Christian Brothers have outlined steps that will be taken to assist students in finding other Catholic schools and to assist faculty and staff to find other teaching positions. I offer my support to the Christian Brothers in their transitional efforts. To all affected by this difficult and sad decision, I offer my prayers.