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Final Decision on Blessed Sacrament School campus, Erie

The Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education affirms the final decision of The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, Bishop of Erie, to close the Blessed Sacrament School campus in Erie.

Following careful deliberation, the Dicastery for Culture and Education (the Vatican office which represents the Holy Father on matters of Catholic education) has informed the Diocese of Erie that it has declined the hierarchical recourse (similar to an appeal) filed against the closure. This decision confirms Bishop Persico's original determination to close the Blessed Sacrament School campus at the conclusion of the 2024–2025 academic year.

The Erie Catholic School System (ECSS) first announced this closure on February 14, 2025, after the recommendation was presented by the board of directors for the ECSS and accepted by Bishop Persico.

The Erie Catholic School System conducted a growth and vitality study for the six schools within the system, working with parents, teachers and administrators to collect and analyze financial and operational data. After the extensive study, ECSS cited continuous decline in enrollment at the Blessed Sacrament School campus as the largest determining factor to close the school. In recent years, Blessed Sacrament School campus enrollment dropped 52 percent.

“The Diocese of Erie wants to emphasize that the closing of this campus is not a criticism of Blessed Sacrament School's legacy, but a responsible action taken strategically for the future of Catholic education in the City of Erie,” said Father Christopher J. Singer, JCL, Chancellor for the Diocese of Erie.

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KRISTINE RILLING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1167
Cell 814.397.8366
krilling@ErieRCD.org

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1161

AFTER-HOURS ANSWERING SERVICE
814.451.1531

Beginning in March of 2025, a hierarchical recourse had been lodged to the Vatican in response the closure. In July 2025, after a review of the case, the Dicastery for Culture and Education rejected the appeal.

Opening its doors in the fall of 1939, Blessed Sacrament was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph for generations. During its heyday in the mid-1950s, the school added ten rooms to its floorplan, accommodating more than 1,000 students. The Blessed Sacrament Parish school closed in 2017 and the campus was incorporated into the newly established Erie Catholic School System. At the end of the most recent academic year, 178 students attended the Blessed Sacrament campus. Today, 80% of students have selected another school within the Erie Catholic School System for the 2025-2026 academic school year.

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