



St. Louise Parish

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October 8, 2021

Dear Friends at St. Louise,

Recently, St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians provided me with direction in this time of the pandemic, event though I must admit, I have not always lived up to St. Paul's ideals consistently. Here are the words that St. Paul give us:

In the name of the encouragement you owe me in Christ, in the name of the solace that love can give, of fellowship in spirit, compassion and pity, I beg of you: make my joy complete by your unanimity, possessing the one love, united in spirit and ideals. Never act out of rivalry or conceit; rather let all parties think humbly of others as superior to themselves, each of you looking to others' interest rather than his own. Your attitude must be that of Christ:

Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave being born in the likeness of men. (Phil. 2:1-8)

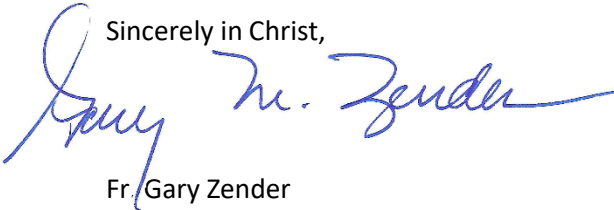
It is with these words in mind that I share with the parishioners of St. Louise Parish the announcement that Mr. Dan Fitzpatrick made to the St. Louise School community on Thursday, October 7. He has made the difficult decision to resign as principal of our school, in fidelity to his conscience, due to the State mandate of all educators to be vaccinated for COVID-19 or lose their jobs. He fully understands that a Catholic may be vaccinated because the connection to aborted stem cells in the research, or development or production of the vaccines is remote. However, he also knows that a Catholic may, after consideration of relevant information and moral principles and for reasons of conscience, refuse a vaccine associated with cell lines from aborted fetuses, however remote. Mr. Fitzpatrick's decision to not be vaccinated is deeply personal and was made from his faith convictions and personal family experience. As many of you know, his children were adopted and he and his wife Arleen, are eternally grateful to the mothers who gave birth to their children. **It is important that each one of us, respect his decision,** even for those might not personally agree with it. I want to add that Mr. Fitzpatrick did apply to the Archdiocese for a moral exemption based on his beliefs. He was granted that exemption with accommodations and he found that he could not fulfill those accommodations and do the job as is needed to be done. His last day will be Friday, October 15. It goes without saying that we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Fitzpatrick for his 33 years of service to our school and 32 of those as our principal. **Countless parishioners had him as a principal as a student themselves, or as a parent or grandparent of a student. It is hard to express the kind of impact that he has had on the life of our parish and beyond. On behalf of everyone at St. Louise Parish and School, I want to thank Mr. Fitz for his tireless dedication and service.**

What is next for our school? Our Vice Principal, Mr. Mike Fuerte will serve as interim principal. As I write this letter we are actively looking for an interim Vice Principal with the help of the Office of Catholic Schools. I am grateful that Mr. Fitzpatrick will work remotely to give Mr. Fuerte the support he needs for a successful year. We will soon begin the search for a new principal which will be an open process and Mr. Fuerte is welcome to apply.

The pandemic has too often lifted up our divisions. Now more than ever, we need to turn to Jesus so that we may have his attitude. Where there is division, we look for the path to unity. Where there is rancor, we look for the path to reconciliation and forgiveness. We seek to put others before ourselves. This is our time, difficult as it is, to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, thank you, thank you Mr. Fitz. We are truly indebted for all that you have given to our children and families at St. Louise Parish School over the years. From the bottom of our hearts, we express our gratitude, prayers and sincere wishes for a blessed future for him.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary M. Zender". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Fr. Gary Zender
Pastor