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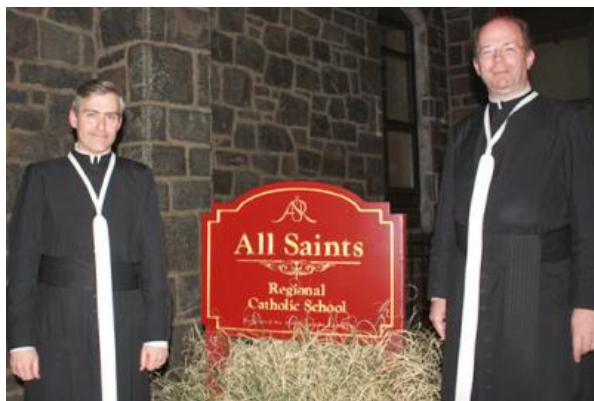
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Father Elias Carr to become headmaster at regional school



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PETE SHEEHAN | TLIC

GLEN COVE — All Saints Regional School here is adopting a new model of leadership for next year — the appointment of a religious order priest as headmaster.

With the coming retirement of All Saints' principal James Thompson, Father Elias Carr, a member of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine and pastor of St. Rocco's Church here, will take on the additional duties of headmaster of the school. An academic dean will assist in administration of the school.

"We are excited and hopeful," said Father Daniel Nash, pastor of St. Patrick's Church here, who leads the local Canons Regular community. "We are grateful for the confidence that the diocese has placed in us and in continuing to keep the school open."

Though the European-based religious order does not operate schools, "we have a 900-year scholarly tradition that we will bring to the task of leading the school," Father Elias said. "I'm looking forward to the challenge." He has some experience in classroom teaching and extensive training and experience in catechesis.

"Being a Catholic school is more than having religion classes," Father Elias said. "It's a way of looking at the world that permeates the atmosphere of the school and how it approaches all learning."

All Saints, which serves students from St. Patrick's, St. Rocco's, St. Hyacinth, Glen Head, St. Mary's, Roslyn, and St. Boniface Martyr, Sea Cliff, "will continue as a diocesan school," Father Daniel said, operating in conjunction with the Strategic Plan for Catholic Elementary Schools developed by Bishop William Murphy's Advisory Committee on Catholic Education.

"The only difference is the school will have a headmaster and an academic dean instead of a principal," Father Elias said. The academic dean, who will be hired later, will answer to the headmaster and focus

more on the daily tasks of school administration.

"The academic dean will free up the headmaster to spend more time as a priestly presence to the students and faculty," Father Elias said.

The Canons Regular came to Glen Cove to operate St. Patrick's and St. Rocco's last June. In addition to Father Daniel and Father Elias, Father Bruno Semple came as associate pastor. The three are among eight U.S.-born men who joined the order in Austria with the hope of bringing the order's tradition to the U.S.

Discussion about the direction of the school's leadership among the pastors of the parishes served by All Saints arose with the announced retirement of Thompson, who has served almost a decade as principal here after a long career in the New York City schools.

Amid various options considered was the possibility of the Canons Regulars taking a more active role in the school.

"We have received such a warm welcome from the parish, from the school, from the Glen Cove community, and from the diocese, that we wanted to give back," Father Daniel said. Further discussion ensued with the All Saints' school board's search committee for a principal.

The decision to adopt a new model of administration for All Saints School, said Ursuline Sister Joanne Callahan, diocesan superintendent of schools, was made in consultation with the diocesan Education Commission and members of the bishop's education advisory committee.

"I think it's exciting," Sister Joanne said. "I'm impressed by the Canons' dedication to Catholic education and I think it bodes well for the future."

One aspect of the Canons Regular's leadership in the school, Father Daniel said, will be an emphasis on Catholic identity. The presence of members of a religious order is a valuable asset for emphasizing that identity, he noted. All members of the community will be involved in the school.

In addition to the three Canons Regular now serving here, Father Daniel said, a fourth member of the order will be assigned to assist as the order undertakes the additional responsibility.

Carol Needham Taylor, an attorney who chairs the diocesan Education Commission, praised the decision as "innovative, showing a desire to try new things. The Glen Cove community has a unique situation which makes it a good place to try something like this.

"I'm also pleased that the Canons Regular have such a clear focus on a strong Catholic identity for the school," she added.

"We're delighted" with the new leadership model, said Kathleen Deegan Dickson, a member of All Saints' school board and co-chair of its principal search committee. "Sometimes change makes people nervous but I think that Father Elias will bring a whole new dimension that will be wonderful for our school."

About the Author »



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