



*Diocese of Fall River*  
*Office of the Bishop*  
*Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.*

March 8, 2023

Dear Friends,

May the blessings of Lent be upon you and your families. Two weeks ago, we celebrated the beginning of Lent. Lent comes from "lengthening of the days" or springtime. It is when we move from the darkness of winter into the light of spring. We are made to live in the light, and our real light who guides our way is Jesus. He is the light of the world and of our lives. We need to live and to help each other guided by the light and teaching Jesus.

Over the past many years, the Diocese of Fall River has worked very hard to maintain educational excellence, expand enrollment and recruitment activities, and bolster financial aid opportunities in order to sustain Bishop Connolly High School. Despite these efforts, Bishop Connolly has experienced a significant decline in enrollment and, as a result, the Diocese has spent over \$1 million to sustain the school over the past five years.

Moreover, the recent pandemic and current unfavorable economic environment have not only caused a lot of suffering for many people, but there has been an adverse impact to the finances of the Diocese. Thus, due to the continued decline in enrollment and to the unavoidable financial reality, the Diocese no longer has the resources to continue to keep Bishop Connolly operational. In addition, the Diocese of Fall River has had to provide an additional \$2 million over the same time period to support Catholic education in other parts of the Diocese. Overall, the Diocese has invested over \$3 million into Catholic schools since 2019, which is no longer sustainable.

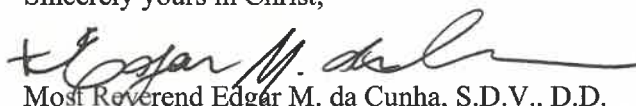
Therefore, after consultation with the Central Catholic Schools Board and much reflection and prayer, it is with a heavy heart that I have decided to close Bishop Connolly High School at the end of this school year.

I understand the sadness and disappointment this decision will engender; please know that Jesus is asking all of us to work together through our challenges to build up His Kingdom here in the Diocese of Fall River.

Immediately after receiving this email announcement, you will receive a secondary email that contains information addressing more specific questions and challenges as a result of this closure.

Right now, it feels as if we are all mourning a great loss just as the disciples did on Good Friday. On that day when death and darkness fell over the whole earth, Christ's followers did not know that Easter was coming. Similarly, these dark days of the current environment will one day be behind us, and, in the meantime, we place our worries, fears and our uncertainties in the hands of the Lord. As people of faith and hope, we will continue to strengthen the future of Catholic education. And while we do this together, we build on the foundation of the past and look with hope for the future.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.  
Bishop of Fall River