

Be fiscally responsible and close schools with small Catholic population

It is sad that so many Catholic children and their families left the parish Catholic schools of Baltimore. These schools were “real” Catholic schools, because the student population was mostly Catholic.

The departing families also took with them a spark of life that brought vitality and strength to the parishes.

There are many reasons for the loss of Catholic students: rising tuition costs that made education less affordable to poorer and middle class families; smaller families; less religious. More importantly, the archdiocese implemented policies that no longer made supporting affordable tuition for Catholic children a priority.

Struggling Catholic schools were abruptly closed or clustered. Families were told where to send their children. The combined student enrollment of Catholic children at two schools, Sts. James and John and St Katherine, is less than 100, or about 50 children per school.

Father Richard T. Lawrence (CR, Jan. 8) misses a salient point when he opines that “We’ve done it for Irish kids, German kids, Polish kids and Italian kids and today we are doing it for African-American kids. We’re not going to let these schools die.”

In fact, those Irish, German, etc. kids were overwhelmingly Catholic. The schools (and parishes) were supported financially by Catholic families, members of religious orders and an archdiocese that strongly believed in providing a solid, affordable education to students who were Catholic.

If there are only about 50 Catholic children in each school, it seems the fiscally responsible action should be to close the schools.