

First Catholic Montessori School Named

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, announced today that St. Pius X Catholic School in Rodgers Forge will become the first Catholic school in the Archdiocese to offer its students a Montessori education. The school will introduce a Montessori primary program for children ages 3-6 in the 2011-12 school year.

The Montessori method of teaching was developed by an Italian physician, Dr. Maria Montessori, in 1907 and utilizes a comprehensive approach that allows children to proceed at their own pace and focuses on all aspects of human development—intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual—to make learning an exciting process of discovery.

The Archbishop also announced that the school will partner with Loyola University Maryland, which has one of the premier Montessori graduate programs in the United States.

"We are excited to offer this program to students in the Archdiocese because of its track record of success in educating today's student and because it gives Catholic parents who desire both a Catholic and Montessori education for their child, a great option," Archbishop O'Brien said. "We are especially grateful to be working with Loyola and consider our partnership a vitally important one for the future of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore."

Montessori classes place children in three-year age groupings: Primary (ages 3-6), and Elementary (ages 6-9 and 9-12). A certified Montessori teacher, assisted by a trained teacher assistant, is present to observe and present new activities to children as they demonstrate their need and readiness. The Catholic faith formation component of the program allows children to learn about the Catholic liturgy and Holy Scripture.

The first classes of the new primary Montessori program at St. Pius X School will occur in the 2011-12 school year and will be offered to three-and four-year-olds. In

the second and subsequent years, the program will include students ages three, four and five.

“St Pius X School is extremely excited about being selected by the Archdiocese of Baltimore as the site for this innovative program,” incoming Principal, Mrs. Maggie Dates said. “The school is a dynamic educational environment and this additional program will be very attractive to young families.”

Prior to the start of the 2011-12 school year, St. Pius will be making preparations to ensure the program is implemented effectively, including the recruitment and training of teachers certified to teach in the Montessori program. Loyola’s Center for Montessori Education houses the oldest Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)-accredited training center in North America, the Washington Montessori Institute.

“Loyola’s School of Education and Center for Montessori Education are delighted to partner with St. Pius X School in bringing the Montessori educational experience to students in the Archdiocese,” said Peter C. Murrell, Jr., Ph.D., dean of Loyola’s School of Education. “The Montessori approach to education offers children a unique learning experience very much in keeping with Loyola’s focus on educating the whole person, and we are very pleased St. Pius, a well-regarded school, is interested in incorporating the Montessori approach into its learning environment.

“This partnership is a ground-breaking opportunity for us to not only enrich the school with a Montessori approach, but to create the kind of professional learning community that could lead the way in demonstrating how to revitalize schools through collaborative engagement, spiritual focus, and capacity building.”

The naming of the first Catholic school in the Archdiocese to offer a Montessori education marks the fourth designation of an enhanced academic program since the Archbishop’s March 4 announcement about investment in academic initiatives. The program is one of a number of academic enhancements the Archdiocese is making to ensure that Catholic schools in the Archdiocese remain competitive.

Students in the Pre-K3 program at St. Pius X for the 2010-11 year will receive automatic acceptance to the Montessori program for the 2011-12 school year. Other

three-and four-year-olds will be accepted as space allows. An informational meeting for parents will be held in the fall of 2010. It is anticipated that tuition and fees for the primary Montessori program will be similar to the current fee structure. Specific tuition and fees are set by the school's board and announced each year during Catholic Schools Week, typically late January.

St. Pius X School is located at 6432 York Road in Rodgers Forge. The tuition for pre-k/kindergarten at St. Pius is \$5,100 for the 2010-11 school year.

For more information on the school's Montessori program, visit their website at www.stpius10.org.