



**Statement by the Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn**

As Bishop of Brooklyn, it was with great sadness and reluctance that the Diocese was left with no other option than to initiate a lawsuit against Christ the King High School. I wish to personally assure each and every student, faculty member, and parent of Christ the King High School that the Diocese of Brooklyn has no intent or desire to seek the closing of your High School. It is also necessary for me to correct a number of unfortunate misstatements that have been reported in the press this past week concerning the lawsuit.

The lawsuit was commenced on November 4, 2013, after two years of futile and disappointing negotiations with the Board of Trustees of the High School. The Diocese had requested that the Board of Trustees reaffirm the 1976 agreement which established the parameters for the conveyance of the property to the High School some 37 years ago. Included in the 1976 agreement was a binding commitment on the part of the High School that if the Board of Trustees no longer maintained and operated a Catholic high school, that the property would be returned to the Diocese.

Needless to say, it is our fervent hope and prayer that Christ the King will forever continue to serve the young men and women of our Diocese and the property will continue to serve that most worthy cause. For some inexplicable reason, the Board of Trustees has refused to reaffirm the terms and conditions of its 1976 agreement, notwithstanding the fact that all of the other 5 former Diocesan high schools promptly and in good faith reaffirmed their respective agreements with the Diocese.

The Diocese recognizes that in these very challenging economic times that our high schools need to be creative by leasing excess space and using those funds to keep tuition costs at a manageable level. When presented with copies of the proposed leases, the Diocese has consistently supported those endeavors on the part of our high schools. However, leases to charter schools pose a direct threat to our local Catholic elementary schools. It has been documented in each instance where a charter school is opened in our Diocese, that our local elementary schools are regrettably confronted with a loss of students who transfer to the neighboring tuition-free charter school.

In order for our Catholic elementary schools to remain competitive in this challenging environment of ever growing tuition-free charter schools, the Diocese has required that every local parish and high school that leases to a charter school remit to the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Trust an amount equal to forty (40%) percent of the rent revenues realized from the charter school lease. The Trust then directly distributes those funds in the form of scholarships to lower income students attending Catholic elementary schools that are directly and negatively impacted by the particular charter school. None of the money remitted to the Trust is turned over to the Diocese. Sadly, Christ the King High School stands apart as the only affected high school or parish that has not contributed the appropriate amount to the Trust.

As Bishop, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the faculty members of Christ the King High School who work tirelessly to educate our young men and women in the Catholic high school tradition and to acknowledge and express my sincere appreciation for the financial sacrifice made by the parents of the students who attend all of our Catholic elementary and high schools, including Christ the King. Each of you is to be commended for your unwavering devotion to the Catholic Church we all love and cherish.