

Church Seeks to 'Ransom' Kids From Public School 'Culture of Death'

A Catholic church in Virginia is offering its members \$2,000 to move their child out of public school to a Catholic school of their choice.

The *Arlington Catholic Herald* reports for many years, parishioners at St. Raymond of Penafort Church in Springfield, which has no parochial school, were able to get scholarships to cover the difference between "in parish" and "out of parish" tuition rates at neighboring Catholic schools.

But the church's pastor, Rev. John C. De Celles, told the website he wanted to help out his church's families even more.

"I think right now the schooling of our children is the issue. We'll lose them to the culture of death if we don't provide an environment where they can learn to love Christ in the educational setting," he told *the Herald*. "We're the church, and we have to do something here. These are our kids."

So, De Celles decided the school's parents needed more financial support.

After one year of receiving the \$2,000 scholarship, parents can receive \$1,000 per child to remain at a Catholic school. Homeschooling parents are offered money for educational costs. Any family can ask for more assistance if needed, according to the *Herald*.

Funding for the scholarships and extended financial assistance comes from what the church calls the Our Lady of Ransom Fund. It is funded entirely by donations.

According to the *Herald*, the name of the fund recalls when the

Virgin Mary appeared to St. Raymond in 1218 and asked him and others to found a religious order—the Mercedarians—that would organize the ransom of Christians who had been kidnapped by Moorish raiders.

So far this year, the church has raised more than \$140,000 for the fund, which helped 113 students with their tuition.

Parent Caroline Ganthier, whose daughter received a scholarship, called her church's school "wonderful" and told the *Herald* her daughter is "where she needs to be."

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