



## *St. Mary Star of the Sea Alumni Association*

For Immediate Release:

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### **The Bells of St. Mary's Are Calling You Home!**

St. Mary's Alumni Association Celebrates 134 Years of Catholic Education

April 28, 2010, Far Rockaway, NY.....In September of 1877, St. Mary Star of the Sea parochial school opened its doors for the first time with sixty students and administrators and teachers provided by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The need for classroom space increased as the young parish grew, and work began on the present school building in the fall of 1908. The new building, a Tudor Gothic design composed of brick and terra cotta, opened in 1909 and heralded the arrival of the brothers of the Sacred Heart to teach the upper boys' grades. Over the past 134 years, St. Mary's has provided a quality Catholic education to many thousands of students, achieving the prestigious Middle States accreditation along the way.

While rich in tradition and achievement, recent economic and demographic trends have not been kind to St. Mary's School. As a result of the findings of a special task force commissioned to analyze the vitality of all Diocesan parochial schools, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio has accepted the recommendation that St. Mary's School close its doors at the end of this academic year, on June 30, 2011.

In response to this decision – so painful for the many stakeholders, past and present, who take great pride in the accomplishments of the school and its graduates - the St. Mary's Alumni Association has renewed its commitment to Catholic education in Far Rockaway.

The neighboring parochial schools on the Rockaway peninsula have set aside classroom seats to accommodate our students, and are providing assistance in the transfer process. The Alumni Association has decided to redirect its



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core mission to stabilizing enrollment rates among our parish school children by providing financial support in the form of partial scholarships.

To promote our new beginning, and to celebrate 134 years of Catholic education in Far Rockaway, we are pleased to announce a very special parish community event and alumni reunion: *The Bells of St. Mary's are Calling You Home!*

We welcome all to share in this most special Mass, in honor, celebration and remembrance of the graduates of St. Mary Star of the Sea School. The *Alumni Mass of Celebration* will be immediately followed by a student-assisted tour of the school and cocktail reception featuring music and dancing to the blues style show band sounds of Cool Hand Lou & the Downtown Daddy-O's (front man Lou Gerrero, *Class of '77*). This event will be held on Saturday, June 4, 2011, at St. Mary's Church and School. Mass begins at 3:00pm, immediately followed by the alumni reunion, cocktail reception and tour of the school. Admission price is \$ 20 per person; adults only, please. Parking will be available at St. Mary's School and the St. John's Episcopal South Shore Hospital employee parking field on Beach 20<sup>th</sup> Street. For additional information please contact Lillian Matlock Higgins (516-561-2770) or Julia Waldron (718-327-1189).

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