



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

January 15, 2014

**Statement by Archbishop J. Peter Sartain
regarding Eastside Catholic High School personnel action**

(Seattle) This morning a petition signed by numerous people around the country was delivered to the offices of the Archdiocese of Seattle seeking the reinstatement of Mark Zmuda, the former vice-principal of Eastside Catholic High School.

Catholic schools in this archdiocese and around the country have an extraordinary heritage of faithfully handing on the Catholic faith, providing an excellent curriculum, and creating an environment in which young people are educated and formed as disciples of the Lord Jesus and faith-filled citizens. Catholic teaching in all its breadth is the hallmark of Catholic schools and we have a right and responsibility to help them uphold their principles and traditions.

Leaders of Catholic schools are charged with the responsibility of both imparting and modeling our teaching. The recent personnel decision by the board and administrators of Eastside Catholic regarding Mr. Zmuda was made after a great deal of prayer and consultation. In no way was their goal to be discriminatory to anyone but to be faithful to their mission as a Catholic school. The Archdiocese supports their decision. The decision has been misunderstood and mischaracterized by some, and we now have an opportunity to help our students learn even more about Catholic teaching.

Pope Francis has often reminded us of the limitless mercy of God, for Jesus came to bring his Father's mercy. At the same time, Pope Francis has also reminded us of our responsibility as Catholics to live the timeless truth of Church teaching on a wide variety of topics, including the sacredness of traditional marriage.

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