

**For Immediate Release:**

## ***Catholic School Teachers in Archdiocese of New York Are Taking Strike Votes***

- **Teachers to strike Friday to save Catholic schools**
- **Teachers pursue unfair labor practice charges against Archdiocese**

April 28, 2015 – Catholic school teachers in the Archdiocese of New York are taking strike votes at numerous schools and will engage in a series of one-day strikes in the days and weeks ahead. Teachers at five schools will strike Friday, May 1. Other schools will be struck next week.

The Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT), the union representing the teachers in the New York Archdiocese, has filed unfair labor practice charges against the Archdiocese's Association of Catholic Schools for threatening to close up to 10 more schools a year if the teachers receive a wage increase of even 1% (one percent). The teachers, who have been working without a contract since September, accepted low wage increases three years ago to help keep schools from closing. Catholic schools superintendent Timothy McNiff later announced that the schools were financially sound and there would be no more closings. A total of 60 have been closed since 2011. McNiff also said that the money from closed schools now being rented by others would be poured back into the Catholic school system.

"Unfortunately, contract negotiations have gone backward," says FCT President Julia Pignataro. "They offered us paltry one percent wage increases and then said they would have to close more schools if we accepted it. That's coercion. It's unjust and unwarranted."

While teachers at many individual schools have already voted to strike for one-day, teachers at five of the schools will actually be on strike this Friday.

"We are going on strike to save Catholic schools," Pignataro says. "It is unfair for our members—and Catholic school students—to be threatened with more school closings simply because we are engaging in our legal right to bargain collectively. Pope Francis recently said school teachers are grossly underpaid. It's too bad the Archdiocese doesn't realize the Pope is right about this."

**For further details contact the FCT at 718-370-0081 or 347-577-2520**