



South Carolina Council of Catholic Women

2025 Convention Project

St. Rita Relief Fund – Emergency Tuition for Catholic School

On Sept. 11 this year, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that the Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) was unconstitutional and ordered that the Department of Education not distribute additional funding to recipient families for use in nonpublic schools.

The Diocese of Charleston and the 22 Catholic schools with ESTF families had to cover the remainder. This was not budgeted for by the schools or the diocese and was a devastating blow to our families who relied on the program to attend Catholic school. So, the St. Rita Relief Fund was established as an emergency effort to cover costs.

Through the generous and gracious support of donors around the state — and an out-of-state philanthropist who donated to all ESTF students in nonpublic schools in South Carolina — the first semester has been covered. We give thanks to and are grateful for all who sacrificed to cover these costs on behalf of Catholic education.

However, this is a temporary measure. Funds will need to be raised to cover the remainder of the academic year for the 195 students in Catholic schools. The South Carolina Catholic Conference is working for and committed to finding a solution in the upcoming legislative session, and discussions are currently underway to determine how best to help our affected families. For more information, please contact Mary Nemeth, Major Gifts & Special Events officer for the diocese: mnemeth@charlestdiocese.org, 843-261-0530 or 267-664-0904. Visit charlestdiocese.org/saint-rita-fund to donate.

St. Rita, patroness of impossible causes, pray for us.

Jeannette Altenburg, *President*
South Carolina Council of Catholic Women

“The LORD is trustworthy in all his words, and loving in all his works. The LORD supports all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down” (Ps 145:13-14).