



## Third Sunday in Ordinary Time A January 26, 2020

### Is the Catholic School system worth supporting even if many of its graduates no longer go to Church? Some responses

When we talk about the Catholic School system, especially during *Catholic Schools Week*, some if not many parents bemoan the fact that they sent their child/children to a Catholic School but they stopped going to Church. This is indeed a sad fact. But I strongly believe that as disheartening as it may be, it should not be a reason for us to weaken our support for the Catholic School system. Why? Because a Catholic School education gives a child a great start in life.

- ◆ It is always a plus to have a child in a school that begins the school day with prayer.
- ◆ It is always a plus to have a child in a school that has a weekday school Mass.
- ◆ It is always a plus to have a child in a school which has religious education as an integral part of its curriculum.
- ◆ It is always a plus to have a child in an educational atmosphere where a teacher can speak about God any time of the day and help to integrate faith and learning.
- ◆ It is always a plus to have a child in a school where the parish priest can visit the classrooms and talk about faith, and where children can ask Father any questions.
- ◆ It is always a plus to have a child in a school where children are taught to have compassion for the less fortunate members of society.

In addition to all of the above, Ascension has a great reputation for producing excellent academic results. Teachers at MCC and some public schools often remark that “Ascension students stand out academically.” This is always music in my ears when I hear it. More on the faith issue later.

### Some Ascension School stats

- ◆ Currently, we have 465 students in our Pre-K3 thru 8th grade.
- ◆ 102 students are in our school through the *Step Up For Students* program which pays \$6,519+ per student (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020: \$688,903.58 in scholarship money received).
- ◆ 57 students receive McKay money from the state, the amount of which varies according to the needs of the child (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020: \$373,394 scholarship money received).
- ◆ 6 students are on the Gardiner program for a total of \$49,050 in scholarships. The Gardiner program is like the McKay program, but works a little differently financially.
- ◆ Family Empowerment Scholarship - support for middle-income families. New scholarship this year 2019-2020. 10 students received \$68,900 this fiscal year.
- ◆ This year, our school will receive \$1,180,247.58 in tuition government aid.
- ◆ 33 students received \$89,500 in tuition assistance from the Parish in fiscal year 2018-2019. These are families who did not qualify for *Step Up*.
- ◆ In the last fiscal year, the Thrift Store gave \$55,000 to the school to help with tuition for needy families.
- ◆ Donations through the special yellow school envelopes came to \$69,485 for calendar year 2019. [Note: Donations for this purpose should be made payable to **Ascension School**, not the Parish.]
- ◆ This past year’s Gala netted \$64,711.
- ◆ This past year’s ‘Games of Our Lives’ netted \$12,980.
- ◆ Private donations totaled \$15,437 in 2019.

### Technology

It is imperative for students in today’s world to be able to use cutting edge technology to become creative and critical thinkers who will make a positive impact on the world. In support of this goal, our school has a wide variety of technological tools available for students’ use.

- ◆ Projectors and Interactive SMART boards are in every room, and selected rooms have document cameras (as needed).
- ◆ The computer lab has 30 personal computers running Microsoft Windows 10 and Microsoft Office
- ◆ School wide Wi-Fi access
- ◆ Classrooms VPK through Grade 5 have 5 to 6 computers and/or laptops and iPads in their room for students' daily use.
- ◆ 2 Carts with 32 laptops each
- ◆ 1 Cart with 32 iPads
- ◆ Students use Microsoft Office 365 for email and file storage.
- ◆ Students are permitted to download 5 full versions of Microsoft Office 2016 and Avast Anti-virus software at no additional cost for home use.
- ◆ Computer instruction varies by grade level and includes coding/programming, keyboarding, ethical and fair use of technology and social media, as well as basic computer use. Students also use the computers in most subject areas.
- ◆ There are after-school programs that include:
  - Google Computer Science designed for Grades 4-5, which inspires students to create programs with technology.
  - CyberPatriots for Grades 6-8, where students learn how to secure and protect computers and networks against cyber threats, and compete on a national level with other schools.
- ◆ The entire school is equipped with an audio enhancement and silent security system which is in place in all room. Research shows that audio enhancement has a positive effect on reading and language growth, especially in the lower grades.
- ◆ The new intercom system and bell system provide more functionality for online programming for middle school schedules and bell systems. It also includes technology to warn school-wide of any emergency situation and allows the principal and office personnel to have two-way communication with the teacher and classroom, should the need arise.

Ascension Catholic School is known for having a rigorous academic curriculum and an outstanding fine arts program in a faith-filled, nurturing, caring school environment. Students at Ascension learn and strengthen their faith, not only through the study of religion, but also in the way they work, study, treat each

other, and are treated by the faculty and staff. Our Catholic values are infused throughout a student's stay at Ascension. Our Reading and Language Arts curriculum focuses on developing the fundamentals of reading and language, as well as the ability to analyze and manipulate this symbiotic partnership. The curriculum is aligned with the key elements of language arts standards in writing, reading, speaking, listening, and research. Our goal is for students to demonstrate proficiency in language arts, further inspiring exploration across curriculum and developing their love and appreciation for reading. The objective of our mathematics program is for students to show mastery not only of basic computational skills but to also apply mathematical problem-solving to real life situations. Our progressively more complex curriculum maintains focus of the numeric, algebraic, geometric, statistic, measurement, and probabilistic reasoning at each developmental level. (For more information on our curriculum, including science, social studies, foreign language, please visit our website or arrange a personal tour.) We are well known for meeting our students at their current level and helping them grow to become more successful.

In all faith formation, the goal is to help the young person to have his/her personal encounter with Christ. Needless to say, this cannot be forced. We must always remember that the twelve Apostles had the perfect teacher and perfect model of faith, and yet one of them freely chose another dark path. Our job is to keep *sowing the seeds* and *watering the plants*; the rest is up to Jesus. He alone can touch and change hearts. The question for us is: Are we doing the best we can to model good example, and are we doing everything we can to steer our children in the right direction?

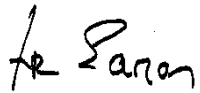
### Some Thank You's

To operate a school like ours and keep up our high standards, we need the co-operation of many people. I am most grateful to:

- ◆ **Parents** who sacrifice to have their child/children in our school
- ◆ **Grandparents** who are helping their grandchildren have a good Catholic education
- ◆ **Our very dedicated school staff:** Principal Anita Brady, Vice Principal and teacher Donna Violi, our teachers and our administrative staff. Daily, these wonderful people create a very welcoming, faith-filled, and safe environment for our school children and parents who visit our school.

- ◆ **Ms. Victoria Dunn**, our School Development Director
- ◆ **John Casco** who heads up the Thrift Store. The Thrift Store gave the School \$55,000 for the year to help with school tuition.
- ◆ All who use the *Yellow School Envelope* to support our school. This calendar school year, \$69,485 was received in donations.
- ◆ All who give *private donations* to the school, all involved in school fundraisers, and all who volunteer at the school.
- ◆ Brian Carley and his dedicated maintenance staff who help to maintain the visible aspects of our School and Parish.

Have a blessed week,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ar. Saran". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.