



## Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time January 31, 2016 C

### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

- ◆ Why parents love Ascension School
- ◆ Pre-K 4 is free at Ascension
- ◆ ‘Step Up For Students’ program
- ◆ Seven thank you’s

Each year at the end of January, our Church sets aside one week to celebrate the gift of Catholic education to our Church and nation. I never get tired of sharing a letter that Brendan McGrath wrote to the editors of US Catholic Magazine some years ago. Every parent wanting the best for their child should read the following letter. Brendan writes:

*As a devout 23-year old Catholic who just graduated from Georgetown University and who attended Catholic Elementary and Catholic High School, I am adverse to anything that could possibly lead to anything but wholehearted devotion to the Catholic School system. I believe that for education to be fully authentic, it must be permeated by religion, which for Catholics means Catholicism. True education cares for the whole person, and since our spiritual/religious dimension permeates our whole existence, body and soul, an education that is not religious is inherently incomplete. This doesn't mean that public schools aren't of value, certainly God's grace is at work in their students, and their teachers are doing God's work in building the kingdom as well. However, public schools operate on a reduced and qualitatively different level compared to Catholic schools, like a circle compared to a sphere. This would remain true even if all public schools were better academically than Catholic ones.*

[It is very clear from the above testimony that a good education involves much more than academics.] If we are interested in the soul and spirit of a child, the part of us that is immortal, then we will seek to do everything possible to nurture that dimension of a child's life. [A Catholic school environment is a great place to do that. In a Catholic school, faith permeates every subject and every part of a child's day.]

### WHAT SOME ASCENSION PARENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

The first four quotes are from parents who transferred their children to Ascension this past August.

Ascension Catholic School's academics are top-notch. Religion is lived and modeled on a daily basis, not just taught. You won't find a better music program anywhere, and the *Soaring* enrichment program can't be beat. In fact, the weekly *Soaring* classes—featuring Lego robotics—are often the highlight of Nicolas' week. When asked what he likes best about Ascension Catholic School, Nicolas answers, "Everything!" That pretty much sums it up for all three of us.

*Stefano, Marcia & Nicolas Coledan*

From the first moment we began the decision to enroll in a Catholic School, we knew Ascension was the right decision. We loved when our second grader, Isabella, came home and said, "I love school so much, my teacher is so nice, we can talk about Jesus all day long." For my children to be able to express their faith openly and be encouraged, there is nothing greater for a parent. I know the foundation being set here at Ascension will remain strong through any storm. Thank you so much to everyone who makes Ascension a wonderful school and community.

*Justin & Janneth Chamberlands*

I am so blessed to have found this amazing school for Abby. She had struggled for many years trying to find the structure, the support, the love, the patience and the care needed to get her to not only love going to school, but feel like she can actually do it. My daughter is finally happy and she is succeeding.

*Danyel Joyner*

After touring several private and public schools last school year, we finally found everything we wanted for our children at Ascension School. They are having a wonderful school year with outstanding teachers and many extracurricular experiences from sports to chess club. We are especially thankful for the Catholic environment and Ascension Community that continues to nurture our family!

*Arrubla family*

Our three grandchildren are challenged with a diverse and stimulating educational curriculum while being instilled with strong spiritual and moral values. Without a doubt, Ascension Catholic School is giving them the tools they need to become tomorrow's leaders, affecting our world in a very positive way.

*Wayne & Susan Hosburgh  
who are raising three of their grandchildren*

Our two children have been in Ascension for two years and they are as happy as they can be. We love the positive energy of the school, the loving teachers, the academic level, the encouragement to read, the sports, the no tolerance to bullying and also the faith in God that transpires everywhere. The church also is beautiful and gives a deep sense of spirituality.

*Carlos & Juliana Rubio*

Ascension Catholic School has been a great gift for our 4 children. The teachers and administration have shown just the right mix of discipline, compassion, and academic rigor. We count Ascension School as one of the top benefits of the Space Coast and are so fortunate our children have attended, and thrived there.

*Tim Laird, M.D.*

Ascension offers challenging academics, recreational clubs/activities for the children to be involved in. The great examples of Christian values that they receive from their teachers and faculty at Ascension, have become an essential part of their growing years. These values which include character, integrity, empathy, and kindness (just to name a few) will become a part of their lifestyle into adulthood and beyond. This, we attribute much thanks to our family at Ascension Catholic School.

*Peter & Mary Bruno*

Having our son at Ascension, where he can learn and practice our Catholic faith, is providing him with a strong foundation and a quality education. What is taught, and how it is taught, are done excellently by teachers that truly care, in an environment that has always been welcoming, safe, and loving. Being a part of Ascension school is the only place, and the best place, for us and, it has been a huge blessing for our whole family through 2 generations now.

*Tracy Elkins*

Ascension Catholic School children receive spiritual guidance and teaching that will help them throughout their lives. ACS has provided our sons with a robust educational experience. Its technology-rich curriculum is supported by an excellent teaching staff. Strong family participation allows ACS to give back to the church and community.

*Robert & Jane Hermida*

## Technology

It is imperative for students in today's world to be able to use the latest 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 tech tools available for students use.

- Projectors and Interactive SMART boards are in almost every room, and selected rooms have document cameras (as needed).
- Our school is equipped with an audio enhancement and silent security system which are now in place in all rooms (Kindergarten through Grade 8). Research shows audio enhancement has a positive effect on reading and language growth, especially in the lower grades.
- Classrooms in grade 5 and below have computers for students to use daily.
- Two mobile computer lab carts, each holding 30 touchscreen devices running Windows 8.1. A new cart will be added this year with new devices.
- Students use Microsoft Office 365 for email and file storage. They are allowed to download 5 full versions of Microsoft Office and Avast Anti-virus software at no additional cost to the student.
- Computer instruction varies by grade level and includes coding, typing, ethical and fair use of technology and social media, as well as basic computer use. Students also use the computers in most subject areas.

## Some Stats

Currently our school has 456 students, 13 new students since Christmas.

- 73 students are in our school through the Step Up For Students state program. This school year, the subsidy is \$5,677 per student. For more information on this program, visit [www.stepupforstudents.org](http://www.stepupforstudents.org). Please tell families on low income about this program.
- **This school year, the parish tuition assistance for the 73 students from July 2015 through December 2015 was \$200,113.**

## Six thank you's

I thank all the **parents** in our parish who have made the good choice of giving their children a Christ-centered education.

I thank **grandparents** who are helping their grandchildren have a Catholic education.

I thank all of you who contribute to the special *school envelope* found in your monthly package. This past calendar year of 2015, donations totaled \$70,800. The average monthly collection is \$5,900. If you are in a position to participate in this form of support to our school, I invite you to consider doing so. Investment in Catholic school education is an investment in the future of Catholicism. Please make your check payable to *Ascension Catholic School*.

I thank **Hank Laneville** and all our bingo workers for their dedication to our parish. Thursday night bingo revenue goes to the school. Last year, bingo contributed \$142,000 to the operation of the school.

I thank **Sr. Joseph**, our school Development Director, and all the dedicated school parents who work with her. Each year, their main fundraiser has been the *Gala Event* which last year netted \$70,000. This year's *Gala Event* is *Saturday, March 5, 2016*, in our parish hall. Last year's *Casino Night* turned out to be a great fun and netted \$25,000. I thank all those individuals who make special donations to our school to help with miscellaneous special projects.

I thank **Tom Knutson** and his **Thrift Store** volunteers for their wonderful work in raising funds to serve the needy in our area. This year they are contributing \$48,000 to our Tuition Aid program.

### **Let's be convinced...**

No school is perfect—and that includes Catholic schools. No school has perfect principals, teachers or parents. Parents and students can have bad experiences in any school, including Catholic schools. Having said that, let us not falter in our conviction as regards the value of a Catholic school education. This weekend, you heard our students proclaim the Word of God at Mass and you listened to school parent's share why it is important for them to have their children receive a Catholic education.

All of us make decisions on how we want to spend our money. I hope that all of you interested in the future of Catholicism are convinced that supporting families seeking to send their children to a Catholic school is one of the *best ways* you can spend your money.

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 students' 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.

Have a blessed week,

