

# FROM THE PASTOR'S



**Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
January 27, 2008 A**

## **CELEBRATING OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**

Each year at the end of January, our church celebrates *Catholic Schools Week*. This year that week is set for January 27th—February 2nd. Catholic School Week celebrates the Catholic school systems contribution to our nation. This year's theme is "*Catholic Schools Light the Way*" which highlights the mission of Catholic schools to provide a faith-based education that supports the whole child academically and spiritually and prepares students to play a vital and positive role in their church and society. Dr. Karen Ristau, the president of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) says: "*As a result of the excellent, multifaceted education they are receiving today, our students will 'light the way' to a brighter future through their leadership in our communities, government, businesses and families.*"

### **Recognition by U.S. Congress**

During *Catholic Schools Week* 2006 the U.S. Congress noted the contribution of the Catholic school system to our nation. They thanked Catholic educators for the high academic achievements of Catholic schools and their contribution to the moral, intellectual, and physical development of millions of students. House Resolution 657 noted that Catholic schools are "internationally acclaimed and that they produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, and families."

### **One of the Largest School Systems in the Country.**

After the Public School system, the Catholic School system is the largest in the country. It has:

- 233 Colleges and Universities with an enrollment of over 750,000 students
- 1,378 High Schools with an enrollment of about 693,000 students.
- 6,376 Elementary Schools with an enrollment of 1,846,000 students.

### **Faith Touching Every Area of the Curriculum**

**In a Catholic school the Good News, which Jesus came to share touches every area of the curriculum. In math and science classes, the students discover the goodness and order of God's creation. In history, students trace the actions of God through time. In literature, music, and art classes, students see**

**expressions of human creativity and God's love for human beings.**

### **School Parents Share Ten Reasons Why They Sacrifice to Send Their Children to Catholic School.**

When asked why they sacrifice to place their children in Ascension Catholic School, Brett and Nicole Hymel gave the following reasons:

1. They receive religious education on a daily basis.
2. They are developing a closer relationship with Jesus.
3. They are taught to pray throughout the day.
4. They are taught to reach out to the less fortunate through participation in service projects.
5. They are encouraged to always put forth their best effort.
6. Students are recognized for their achievements.
7. Students develop close relationship with teachers and classmates who they attend school with from Pre-K through 8th grade.
8. Parents are encouraged to volunteer, share ideas, and take an active role in their children's education.
9. There is a strong sense of community at Ascension.
10. Ascension offers many extra-curricular activities including: chorus, band, cub scouts, boy scouts, girl scouts, drama, chess club, Odyssey of the Mind, recreational soccer and basketball leagues, and a wide variety of team sports. Students are given many opportunities to develop their interests and talents.

In a letter to the editor of the magazine *U.S. Catholic*, Brendan McGrath writes:

*As a devout 23 year old Catholic who just graduated from 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.*

*Public schools may have “character education,” but Catholic schools have God and the Blessed Mother and so much more. Certainly there are numerous good reasons why parents send their children to non-Catholic schools, but we should work to minimize those reasons however we can. Catholic kids in public schools are really missing out.*

It is very clear from the above two testimonies that a good education involves more than academics. If we are interested in the soul and spirit of a child that part of us which is immortal) then we will wish to do everything possible to nurture that dimension of a child’s life. A Catholic school environment is a great place to do that. As stated above in a Catholic school faith permeates every subject and every part of a child’s day.

### Some Thank You’s

- I thank all the **parents** in our parish who have made the **good choice** of giving their child a Christ centered education.
- I thank **grandparents** who are helping their grandchildren have a Catholic education.
- I thank **Hank Laneuville** and all our **bingo workers** for their dedication to our parish. Thursday night’s bingo goes to the school. This year that will be about \$135,000.
- I thank the **Thrift Store** workers for their wonderful work in raising funds to serve the needy in our area. This year they are contributing \$30,000 to our Tuition Aid program.
- 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 our annual **Gala Event** which last year netted \$ . This year we added a **Casino Night** which turned out to be great fun and netted \$30,000. This year’s **Gala Event is Saturday, March 1, 2008** in our School Cafetorium.
- I thank all of you who contribute to financial support of our school by contribution to our special **Catholic School Envelope** found in your monthly envelope package. Since we started in August 2007, this monthly envelope collection averages about \$4,600 a month.
- I thank all those individuals who make **special donations** to our school to help with special projects and school tuition.

### Principal’s Wish List

I am most grateful to our new school Principal, Doug Workman, for his commitment to our school. To give you a small but significant example of his commitment: I was up at 4:30 AM one morning and needed to leave Doug a voice mail message. How surprised I was when he answered the phone at 4:30 AM. Over the years I have found that Catholic school staff and teachers are always ready to go the extra mile to make our Catholic school a good place for our children. I asked our Principal to share with you some items on his Wish List for our school. These are four of them.

- A mobile cart, which could be moved from room to room, **holding and recharging the 15 included laptops**. Students would have the ability to connect to the internet wirelessly and globally connect with others – \$18,676.25.
- 77 inch Interactive Whiteboards with a touch-sensitive display connects to your computer and digital projector to show your computer image. Students and teachers can then control computer applications directly from the display, write notes in digital ink and save your work to share later - \$1,399.00 each.
- LCD Projectors for projecting computer and DVD images on a large screen - \$650.00 each.
- Projection Screens for use with projectors- \$100 each.

I am happy Doug will continue as our school principal next year and hopefully for many more years.

### Prayer for Catholic Schools Week

*Lord Jesus, Son of God,  
Thank you for the gift of Catholic education.  
Day after day, week after week,  
You give us many opportunities to grow and learn.  
Help us respond to the gift of faith so that we may be  
recognized as your disciples.  
Amen*

Have a blessed week,

