Education is More than Math and Spelling in Catholic Schools

Think about it. Schools represent a vital part of any society and are a major source by which the wisdom and culture of a people are passed to new generations. Catholic schools reflect the importance of integrating the Catholic faith with the educational process; therefore, the Church sponsors and supports schools as the major vehicle for pursuing its teaching ministry.

For the Church to carry out the goals of this ministry, the Catholic bishops of the United States have established principles which serve as the foundation from which Catholic education flows and which our schools are committed to pursue. They are:

- Communicating the gospel message of Jesus.
- Building and modeling a community of faith.
- Orienting students to the obligation and experience of service.
- Providing students with the opportunity for growth in prayer.

Though Catholic theology recognizes parents as being primarily responsible for the education of their children, achievement of these principles is shared by faculty members, the parish, and the Diocese. Over the last 100 years, Catholic schools in our diocese have educated thousands of children, who graduate and become active adults dedicated to their faith and community.

What do you know about our schools? When you ask people about education they often reflect on their own experience. Many older members of the community remember nuns as teachers, while younger adults saw a rise in lay teachers offering strong academics but sometimes not as connected to the parish. Still others, like Ms. Rachel Wentling found a lifelong calling and love provided through a Catholic education. Now serving as principal of the very elementary school she attended, the school, like all Catholic schools across the diocese, is focused on not solely academics, but stressing how to live a Catholic life within these quality standards.

This approach, as with many Catholic schools, starts in the elementary grades, sometimes pre-school, and then accelerate as students rise to middle and high schools throughout the diocese.
“Creating a real love and passion for Catholic education, is central to our approach,” Ms. Wentling said in describing the school’s culture. “It is the spirit that exists in the school and leaves an indelible mark on students, parents, and all staff.”

Schools emphasize the formation of students and their faith. Sacred Heart Junior Sara DelReal describes her experience, “Catholic school sets you to a higher standard. You are not only encouraged to excel in school, but you are also encouraged to grow in character, and grow in your faith.”

Each year the school hosts a series of events that serve the community directly and through other Church ministries. Food drives, baby showers for Mary. One program of note is “Blessing Bags” donations, where food for needy families are provided confidentially over weekends and other times when school is out of session.

Additionally, students hold each other accountable for personal behavior and conduct. When issues arise, a team gathers to address the issue. While in practice at Holy Family Elementary School it is being reviewed and implemented in other schools throughout the diocese, with Holy Family serving as the model.

Much like schools of years ago, funding is seen as a collective responsibility. Parents invest with tuition while others, including those without school age students, support the effort with contributions, local parishes provide support and the diocese provides a per student subsidy. This funding arrangement reflects the total commitment to the ministries of the Church, raising up all needs and not supporting only those that impact “me.”

Your gifts to Call to Share make this possible. Through the Annual Appeal, every family has the ability to ensure the needs of all Catholic families are met. In addition to supporting Catholic Schools, education funding from Call to Share helps with Religious Education for those who do not attend Catholic schools, Youth Services, adult education and clergy education.