By Gina Kuntz Fleming

As a product of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, I have fond memories from every grade. I cherish the wonderful teachers who challenged me and supported me, as well as the dedicated volunteers who coached our teams through the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). I recall countless occasions when I witnessed and experienced our faith in action. I am reminded of the numerous opportunities for faith formation, intellectual development and social growth presented throughout my tutelage, and I continue to treasure the incredible friendships established in Catholic schools that remain with me today.

And now, as I serve as superintendent of our Catholic schools, my team and I strive to ensure that the nearly 24,000 young people in our schools today have the same great formational experience I had.

My husband and I rely upon the support of the Catholic community as we raise two young men, one a sophomore at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis and the other a seventh-grader at Holy Name School in Beech Grove. Through it all, God’s grace and love have been evident in the pastors, employees, parishioners and school family members with which we have been blessed.

As Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin recently shared, “Academic research demonstrates that Catholic schools are anchor institutions in neighborhoods and communities throughout America. As communities of faith, they are centers of formation that develop graduates who are more likely to vote and be civically engaged, are more likely to engage in community service, are less likely to engage in criminal behavior, and who have higher earning potentials throughout their lifetimes.”

For further information about the benefits of Catholic schools, you can visit our friends at the University of Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education at ace.nd.edu/resources/catholic-school-research/research-case-for-catholic-schools.

Catholic Schools Week is a wonderful time to pause and thank all those responsible for the amazing impact our Catholic schools have had on our communities.

I am grateful to Archbishop Tobin and Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein for their unwavering commitment to Catholic education and faith formation.

I am honored to serve beside dedicated professionals, who profess their faith through their work and service both in the Office of Catholic Schools and on each school campus.

I am thankful for the pastors and school leaders whose focus on mission and Catholic identity, leadership and governance, academic excellence and operational vitality result in unceasing improvement of and continued prosperity for students, families and parish communities.

I am grateful to our parents, grandparents and generous benefactors who invest in our youth, valuing their formation in the faith that is integral to the life of our Church.

Please join me in thanking a teacher who has made a positive difference in the life of your child. Please pray for the continued growth of each child and family we serve. And, if you have not yet had the privilege of experiencing our Catholic schools firsthand, please contact a nearby school for a tour—it promises to bring you hope for a bright future in our Church and our world.

Happy Catholic Schools Week to all! †
Unique process ‘embraces Catholic teaching,’ develops leadership skills

By Natalie Hofer

Alison Stevens puts first things first, making sure her homework is done before she plays.

Danny O’Gara was wise in the end, knowing that everything he does is toward the bigger goal of getting to heaven.

Lucy Clark likes the synergy in her school, seeing how students work together to accomplish goals.

And Patrick McPherson now seeks to understand others, developing a friendship with a classmate he used to have trouble accepting.

These are just some of the impacts the four students of St. Pius X School in Indianapolis noted about their school’s “The Leader in Me” (TLIM) initiative, three years into the process.

The Leader in Me is a school-based process created by the FranklinCovey company. Based on Stephen Covey’s book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, it is designed to teach students how to be empowered leaders not just in school but at home, in the community and—as at St. Pius X School implemented it—in their Catholic faith.

‘The big goal is that you want to get to heaven’

The idea for implementing TLIM at St. Pius X emulates the first three of the seven habits: “be proactive,” “put first things first” and “begin with the end in mind.”

The process started four years ago, when then-principal Bill Herman read Covey’s book. Thinking proactively, Herman wanted to start reading it with eighth-graders to have them be leaders in the school,” said Keith Yost, the school’s director of student leadership and physical education.

“That led to, ‘Why wouldn’t we want this for all our students?’”

Several teachers and administrators attended a TLIM summit in Ohio, conducted research, and spoke to leaders at St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis, which implemented TLIM in 2012. The most important question of the St. Pius X School team revolved around the end goal of the school: to create students who know, live and love their Catholic faith.

“We could do this for our school to enhance Catholic values?” asked Yost of the administration’s litmus test for implementing the process. “That’s our biggest focus. We wanted to use it as a tool to enhance Catholic teaching.”

With St. Joan of Arc School’s examples and ideas, the St. Pius X administration saw clear connections between the seven habits and living the faith.

For instance, hanging in the main hallway of the school are canvases painted by students, listing the seven habits and the beatitude each represents.

The connection between the habits and the Catholic faith is clear to Marisa Marshall, two of her third-grade students at St. Michael School in Brookville. “Her mother wasn’t raised by her father,” recalls Brack, a third-grade teacher at St. Michael School in Brookville. “Her mother wasn’t part of her life at all. The girl had a challenging time being honest. I caught her in several lies before the first month of school had passed.

“I talked to her about how lying was never OK and how Jesus always knows when we lie, even if no one else does.”

Brack also understood that the girl “wanted to be like everyone else.” So she used that knowledge to her advantage.

“We eventually got to this goal, ‘OK, you can only lie one time today,’” says Brack, a finalist for the 2015 Saint Theodora Guerin Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for an educator in the archdiocese. “She asked, ‘Is it OK to lie once?’ No. ‘As far as I know, that was the end of the lies.’”

Even though Brack knows that children want to “fit in” with their peers, she also encourages them to accept what makes them special.

“God made us all special, different and unique in his own image and likeness,” she says. “We must embrace our differences and each other’s. I’m very compassionate when it comes to making all children feel special and loved for their differences.”
Focus on Catholic faith and prayer guides teacher and her students

By John Shaughnessy

As she strives to make faith the central part of her students’ lives, Amy Plant makes sure it has a visible place in her classroom, too. “My favorite part of my classroom is the Faith Focus wall,” says Plant, a third grade teacher at St. Patrick School in Terre Haute. “On this wall, we have the Beatitudes, common prayers we use daily, the Apostle’s Creed and pictures of all of our families. This wall represents the journey we are taking while becoming Jesus’ disciples in our classroom, school and Church community. The wall has a caption stating, ‘Every child is a story yet to be told.’”

Plant has plenty of stories to share about her students, including a favorite from a year she taught children in the first grade. “This group was full of energy, inquisitiveness and a heaping helping of faith,” says Plant, a finalist for the 2015 Saint Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for an educator in the archdiocese.

“Each day, we would always begin religion with our prayer circle. In previous years, my prayer circle would take about five minutes to pass Prayer Bear around the circle of friends. During that particular year, our prayer circle would last between 15 to 20 minutes. “Although we were missing out on 10 minutes of science or social studies, I knew that the time spent praying with one another was more important. My students learned to respect each other’s petitions. They learned to listen with an open ear and heart. Most importantly, they learned that their prayers were important to the group and to me.”

1. During the past school year, more than 600 Catholic school students in the archdiocese were baptized as Catholics.
2. More than $5.6 million was raised in tax credit scholarship gifts in 2015 to help children in the archdiocese receive a Catholic education.
3. Troy Cockrum, the director of innovative teaching at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School in Indianapolis, was one of just 28 educators in the United States who was chosen to fly on NASA’s Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, the world’s largest flying telescope.
4. When Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis won the Class 3A state championship in football, it also established an Indiana record for most state championships in football—13.
5. Jay Ruckelshaus, a 2011 graduate of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, was selected as a Rhodes Scholar, just one of the 32 recent college graduates from across the country chosen for this national honor for high school All-American, a prestigious academic honor.
6. Catholic high school students in the archdiocese provide more than 100,000 hours of service during the school year.
7. The girls’ volleyball team of Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville won their third straight state championship, this time in Class 3A.
8. Audrey Shannon of Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School was named the winner of the state Class 3A Mental Attitude Award for girls’ volleyball, recognizing her mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability.
9. Keith Owen of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis was honored for those same qualities when he was selected as the winner of the state’s Class A Mental Attitude Award for boys’ soccer.
10. About 94 percent of Catholic high school students in the archdiocese went on to college.
11. A team of teachers at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis was chosen for a special three-year program at the University of Notre Dame that focuses on helping teachers inspire student learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math. St. Barnabas is one of just 10 schools from across the country chosen for this summer-based program.
12. The girls’ soccer team of Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis won the state championship in Class 2A.
13. Lindsey Corsaro of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis was named a McDonald’s All-American, a prestigious national honor for high school basketball players.
14. The girls’ volleyball team of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis won the Class 4A state championship completing an undefeated season that solidified its ranking as the number one team in the country.
15. St. Anthony Catholic School in Indianapolis made the transition from being a charter school to a Catholic school at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.
16. Enrollment in Catholic schools across the archdiocese is nearly 24,000 students, an increase of about 2,000 students since 2010. And all schools continue to focus on the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth of every young person, with the main goal of preparing them for heaven.
High school campus ministry programs help deepen students’ faith

By Sean Gallagher

There’s a great variety in the 12 Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana. Some are located in the middle of large cities. Others are found in small towns. Their student enrollments extend from more than 1,200 to less than 200. Some have student bodies that are largely Catholic. Others have students from a broad mixture of faith communities.

But an essential goal of each is to help students grow in their relationship with Christ and the Church, or at least give them the spiritual knowledge and tools to be able to start that relationship.

“It’s the same mission in every domestic Church in the archdiocese,” said Jeff Traylor, director of campus ministry at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “Every parent has that mission and goal. It’s got to be our goal, from a home-schooled class of one to a Roncalli school of 1,300. It’s our mission as the Church.”

How that mission is achieved can vary depending on the circumstances of a particular high school, but there are campus ministry programs in them all dedicated to striving toward that goal.

Chea Vaughn Drumm does this as the faith formation director at Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison. Unlike larger schools that might have a full-time campus minister, Drumm teaches six classes a day in addition to leading campus ministry efforts at Shawe. But she actually takes joy in wearing so many hats.

“I toss them on and off, and wear them all at the same time,” Drumm said with a laugh.

Having a smaller number of students allows her to get to know them well, and better serve their spiritual needs.

“They feel comfortable coming to me, sharing whatever about their day, whether it was a good thing or a bad thing,” Drumm said. “It’s easy to have one-on-one conversations about their faith life.”

“I wouldn’t trade it for the world. I can deal with all of the lack of resources to have what I have with these kids.”

Brad Macke is in a similar position at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg, which has an enrollment of around 215 students. He likes being able to build relationships with the students there.

“Part of passing on our faith is the relational element, because the faith itself is relational,” Macke said. “The kids are never really anonymous. They’re known by their teachers.”

One of his students is senior Maggie Bruns. Since the start of her junior year, she has helped to organize the school’s service projects, which have included assembling packages of food and then distributing them to homeless people in Cincinnati.

“Packaging the food and handing it out to the people who needed it who were so grateful makes me want to do [more] stuff for other people and help them,” said Maggie, a member of St. Michael Parish in Brookville.

She also said that her time at Oldenburg Academy has helped deepen her faith.

“Going to a Catholic school where there are more teenagers who I can connect with on my level helps to make me grow in my faith,” she said.

For Klee, it’s all part of the process of stressing the importance of relationship with God in heaven. "†"
Blessings abound as teacher creates special moments for students

By John Shaughnessy

In her 17 years as a teacher, Laura Domingo has kept a “gratitude journal” to capture special moments with her students.

“When I see a ‘light bulb’ moment, or when I see them practicing their faith in countless ways, these are the memories I record,” says Domingo, the fourth-grade teacher at St. Mary School in Greensburg.

As one of the best blessings of her teaching career, she lists the ability to share her Catholic faith with her students.

“Over the years, I’ve realized how important it is to tie God into our curriculum, and have challenged myself to do this,” says Domingo, a finalist for the 2015 Saint Theodora Guerin Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for an educator in the archdiocese. “Prayer is first in our day. My students witness impromptu talks and prayers with God as I share our successes or pleas for help directly to him. They smile when I pause and take a moment to say, ‘Hey, God, Joe really needs you right now. He doesn’t think he can get this, and we both know he can. Help me to convince him.’”

She often uses this approach as she works to strengthen her students’ reading ability.

“I’ve tried the moral perspective on characters as we read. What would Suds say to God if he were praying? ’What commandment did Joey just break in this chapter?’ What advice would you give? ’Write a post-it note prayer that a character might need at this point in the novel.’

“It is the day-in, day-out successes that bring me joy. I put blood, sweat and tears into my students.”

New program builds bridge between science and faith

By John Shaughnessy

At 13, Caroline Prentice looked forward to the challenge—a challenge that would combine a fun, different way to learn with an opportunity to better understand the troubling situations that some people face around the world.

In the challenge, Caroline and her classmates focused on the area of water filtration—a major problem in areas across Africa.

“We took soda bottles, cut them in half and filled them with things like tissue paper, sand and dirt and charcoal, and we tried to see if the water came out clean,” Caroline says. “The water project related back to how we have clean water, and how there isn’t clean water in parts of Africa.

“I learned that it is not easy for people in Africa to get water, and they need people in developed countries to help them because water aids them in connecting with other resources like education, food markets and medical aid.

“It helps us be more grateful for what we do have, and it inspires us to believe we can make a difference in the lives of others who don’t have what we do.”

Caroline’s interest and inspiration reflect the enthusiastic response of many students at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis—one of the outcomes of a team of teachers from the school being chosen for a special three-year program at the University of Notre Dame that focuses on helping teachers inspire student learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

The team from St. Barnabas was just one of 10 schools from across the country to be chosen for the summer-based, Notre Dame program. The teachers hope to share what they learn with schools across the archdiocese.

“The number of kids in America who are going into STEM careers has nose-dived,” says Autumn Scheer, a member of the St. Barnabas team along with Doug Bauman, Megan Burnett and Ryan Schuarr.

“Around fifth- and sixth-grade, students stop identifying themselves as an engineer, a scientist, an astronaut, a mathematician. It’s because they haven’t had enough authentic real-world experiences in those areas. They need competent teachers to get kids excited and keep that identity.”

To challenge her fifth-grade science students, Burnett created a fun assignment that combines creativity and teamwork with one of the most popular snacks for both children and adults: popcorn.

“Brainstorming individually—to come up with an idea to solve the problem, while all the time understanding there isn’t a bad idea.”

“Becoming a part of a group where they will present their ideas to others before choosing the best one—or one that combines different elements of the different ideas.”

“Working together to design and build the container.”

“Their ideas are so engaged and excited,” Burnett says. “There’s a lot of good thinking going on. They’re getting a lot of confidence in looking at the world from a science and math perspective. That’s what I want for them.”

The increased real-world emphasis has given Bauman—a math teacher for the seventh- and eighth-grades—a ready response to his students’ question, “How am I ever going to use this?”

“Because of STEM, it allows me to go beyond the numbers,” he says. “Why does your driveway slope to the street? It’s not just the construction of the driveway, but the science and math behind it. Some of my students have parents who are engineers and scientists, but we’re also trying to show how it applies to the carpenter, the nurse, the plumber—because they all use science, technology, engineering and math to solve real-world problems.”

The approach has connected with Caroline, who wants to be a nurse, and Max Greene, who wants to be an engineer.

“Last year, a lot of times we did simple experiments,” says Max, a seventh-grade student. “This year, we’re doing a lot more do-it-yourself, hands-on experiments. It’s more fun, and it gives you a better understanding of what we’re trying to do.”

Carolyn adds, “It helps us grow our minds.”

While the Notre Dame program focuses on developing interest in STEM for fifth- to eighth-grade students, the teachers at St. Barnabas are trying to bring it to all grade levels at the school, including pre-kindergarten classes.

“I’m working with teachers in grade one and two,” says Schuarr, a fifth-grade teacher of math and social studies. “STEM has helped us understand what is being required at all grade levels. So we’re continuing to make these bridges.”

The best bridge, the teachers say, is how the focus connects to faith.

“The mission of Catholic schools is to form the entire student—academically, spiritually, physically, mentally,” Bauman says. “My wife teaches kindergarten here, and we have three kids here. When we say, ‘Today is STEM day,’ they leap out of bed. It gives kids another window of opportunity to express who they are.

“I’m a firm believer as a Catholic that God has blessed us with our own unique set of gifts. Prior to us implementing STEM, our kids weren’t given the full opportunity to display their math and science skills in a very creative way. By having these STEM initiatives, it gives these kids an outlet. As a dad, I’m so happy that my kids are able to use the gifts God gave them in such a fruitful and fulfilling way.”
Learning through play builds strong foundation for pre-K children

By Natalie Hoffer

Sunshine filtered through the row of windows as the group of 3- and 4-year-olds chose their desired group activity at Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis.

At one table, eight children pounded and rolled playdough.

“Look! It’s a octopus!” shouted one girl, holding up a playdough ball with dangling playdough legs.

At another table, eight children used Q-tips, glue, construction paper and paint to make snowflake designs, if they wanted.

“I’m making a monster!” one little boy shouted, opting against a snowflake pattern. His teacher affirmed that “yes,” it was a scary monster.

The average person looking in on the scene might see children just being children. But Mimi Barry sees children learning social skills, dexterity, shapes and other skills while doing what they naturally do at this age—play.

“I feel it’s important at this age, especially between the ages of 3-5, to begin with their learning just through play,” she said. “They’re not being rushed and pushed to learn their letters on worksheets, because eventually they get worn out, in my opinion. You want them to start off enjoying school and having it be a positive experience.”

Barry is a coach from St. Mary’s Child Center in Indianapolis, a nonprofit, archdiocesan-affiliated pre-school which serves children of economically disadvantaged families. The center utilizes a form of early childhood education called Reggio Emilia, named for the Italian town where it originated.

Barry spent time recently coaching at Holy Cross Central School, one of five Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA) kindergarten-through-eighth-grade schools in Indianapolis. The student population of MTCA schools mirrors that of St. Mary’s.

Recently, Indiana launched an early education effort called On My Way Pre-K, available in five counties, three of which—Jackson, Marion and Vanderburgh—are in the archdiocese. The program offers funding for low-income families to enroll their children in high-quality pre-K programs.

To better serve children living in poverty and to support the teaching mission of the Church, MTCA schools developed pre-school programs approved by the state to receive On My Way Pre-K funded students.

To improve the pre-school classes even more, the archdiocese contracted St. Mary’s to coach MTCA’s pre-K teachers. The similarity in St. Mary’s and the MTCA schools’ student population, plus St. Mary’s success in serving children in poverty by using the Reggio Emilia method, made the organization a natural choice for coaching.

Conner Sherman, executive director of St. Mary’s, said Reggio Emilia “is not a book with a curriculum.

“We think all children are strong, competent and capable. That influences what you expect from children, and also what you give them in their classroom in terms of activities. It’s very child-driven, experiential and hands-on.”

Sherman’s description of the Reggio Emilia approach mirrored Barry’s comments about learning through play.

“You would never see a child [at St. Mary’s] sit down with a workbook page,” Sherman said. “They work with real objects and natural material, and have conversations about what they are doing. We do a lot of project work, so children might have literacy and math and science that fall under project work.”

But is such “play learning” effective? The numbers indicate yes.

“For many [children living in poverty], this is their chance to have a good future,” said Sherman. “Most [impoverished children] go into school one-and-a-half to two years behind. They lack the experience others are exposed to because their families are so challenged.”

But she went on to say that of last year’s class at St. Mary’s—93 percent of whom came from families living below the poverty level—89 percent entered kindergarten at the appropriate developmental age and skill level.

“If a child is involved in a program like [ours], it’s much more likely they won’t be incarcerated, will graduate from high school, and don’t go into special education,” Sherman said. “We believe that [such positive results] will happen at the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies.”

St. Mary’s success is supported by more than statistics. The National Association for the Education of Young Children has accredited the center, and the State of Indiana licensed it at the highest level on Indiana’s Paths to Quality rating scale.

While the Reggio Emilia approach has proven successful for the center, and while children at St. Mary Child’s Center and the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies schools are similar, the St. Mary’s coaches “are not there to force Reggio Emilia” on MTCA pre-K teachers.

“We are in there to support best practices in the classroom,” said Diane Pike, St. Mary’s director of curriculum and support coach. “Coaches work side by side with [the teachers] and model ways to interact positively with children. They will support the teachers positively and developmentally with the children.”

Mother Theodore Catholic Academies in best practices, doing what is best for the students. “We’re not going in and making them do Reggio, but all of [our coaching] is through that lens, and when you do [what is seen through] that lens, it’s best practices.”

Ruth Henel, principal at Holy Cross Central School, welcomed the opportunity to receive pre-K best practices coaching.

“The majority of our staff are trained [in grades K-8],” she said. “As we look to expand in the pre-school area, that’s not where our experience lies. But it is where the experience lies with St. Mary’s Child Center. The best choice of someone to coach our pre-school teachers would be the best early childhood program, which is St. Mary’s Child Center.”

One of the MTCA schools, St. Anthony School, recently received a grant to add an additional pre-school room, expanding their capacity from 20 students age 4- to 40 students ages 3-R and 4. St. Mary’s Child Center has been hired to operate the pre-K program there next year.

“This school-in-school approach will allow the experts of St. Mary’s Child Center’s early childhood education to work with the experts of elementary education at St. Anthony’s,” said Gina Fleming, superintendent of the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Schools.

“This makes for a natural transition from pre-K to elementary education, and builds a firm foundation for the young people. The best is that we’re capitalizing on the experience of those in the field, and meeting our core focus of serving every need of children in the context of Catholic education.”

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Space flight helps educator lead students to a new dimension

By John Shaughnessy

As the NASA jetliner climbed to 40,000 feet in the night sky, Troy Cockrum became mesmerized by the stunning sight that suddenly came into view.

Straight ahead, he could see the stars that formed the Big Dipper. And just to the right, the brilliant, breathtaking Northern Lights flickered and danced in the distance, leaving Cockrum in awe.

That moment also left the director of innovative teaching at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School in Indianapolis with one overriding wish.

“I was such an amazing experience that I wish every kid at our school could have seen it,” Cockrum says. “We’re in an environment here where not a lot of kids get to travel very far. I want them to see they have options available to them if they keep working on their education.”

Cockrum seized his opportunity when he was one of 28 educators from across the country in 2015 who was chosen to fly on NASA’s Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA), the world’s largest flying telescope.

He spent four days in November at Edwards Air Force Base in southern California, getting an up-close view of NASA’s space-related missions.

“We made two flights, and each flight was about 10 hours,” Cockrum notes. “At NASA, everybody knew what the mission was, they understood the goals of the mission, and they knew how they were all going to contribute to the mission. One of my goals is to create more cross-curricular activities—finding opportunities for a science teacher and an English teacher to work together, or a math teacher and a social studies teacher to work together. Authentic learning is pulling in all these different content areas.”

Developing a mindset of lifelong learning for students and teachers is the driving mission for Cockrum, a former television producer and English teacher who is pursuing a doctoral degree in instructional systems technology.

“I’m familiar with the Catholic school environment,” says Cockrum, who spent his first 12 years of education in Catholic schools. “When I talk to colleagues in public schools, they have to deal with mandates from their school system. I just teach what’s best for my students. There’s also the autonomy Catholic schools have. We have the support of the archdiocese, but we operate independently.”

For Cockrum, there’s one more blessing of teaching in a Catholic school.

“It’s great to openly live your faith without worrying about losing your job.”

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• Sustained by Gospel witness
• Shaped by communion and community
• Accessible to all students
• Established by the expressed authority of the Bishop

(*Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools)

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE ...**

**ACCESSIBLE TO ALL STUDENTS**

- Graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to graduate from high school and college (Grogger & Neal, 2000).
- Latino and African American students in Catholic schools are more likely to graduate from high school and college (Grogger & Neal, 2000).
- Graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to earn higher wages (Neal, 1997).
- Catholic schools tend to produce graduates who are more civically engaged, more tolerant of diverse views, and more committed to service as adults (Campbell, 2001; Wolf, Greene, Kleitz, & Thalhammer, 2001).
- When a Catholic school closes, neighborhood disorder increases (Brinig & Garnett, 2009).

**RESOURCES**

- [University of Notre Dame. For more information, log onto ace.nd.edu](http://ace.nd.edu)
- [RESEARCH SAYS ...](http://researched-case-for-catholic-schools)

**TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP**

- The Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship Program provides scholarships to families who want to enroll their children in the Catholic school of their choice. Qualifying students in grades K-12 can receive a minimum of a $500 Tax Credit Scholarship.

- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program, AND
- A student who is coming to a Catholic school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in a public school, AND/OR
- A current Catholic school student in grades K-12 who has received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher, AND/OR
- A student living in an "F" school area, AND/OR
- A sibling received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher, AND/OR
- A sibling living in an "F" school area, AND/OR
- A student who qualifies for an IEP.

**How can we AFFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL?**

- Understanding Tax Credit Scholarships and Indiana School Vouchers

**TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP**

- [Projected Income Eligibility Levels for Indiana Vouchers and Tax Credit Scholarships](http://www.in.gov/fssa/4944.htm)

- [Additional local scholarships may also be available.](http://www.in.gov/choice)

**K-12 SCHOOL VOUCHERS**

- What is an Indiana School Voucher?
- A Voucher is a state-funded scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition at a private school. Qualifying students in grades K-12 can receive up to 90% of the local per-student state funding amount.

- Who qualifies for a Voucher?
- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart), AND
- A student who is coming to a Catholic school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR
- A current Catholic school student in grades K-12 who has received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher, AND/OR
- A student living in an "F" school area, AND/OR
- A sibling living in an "F" school area, AND/OR
- A student who qualifies for an IEP.

- [How can we AFFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL?](http://www.in.gov/choice)

- Understanding Tax Credit Scholarships and Indiana School Vouchers

- [How do I apply for a Voucher?](http://www.in.gov/choice)

- 1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.
- 2. To apply for funding, visit [www.idsdp.org](http://www.idsdp.org)

**LEARN MORE**

- To learn more about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, read our special publication of the Office of Catholic Schools at [www.archindy.org/OCS-Special-Publication-Fall-2015](http://www.archindy.org/OCS-Special-Publication-Fall-2015)

**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

- Additional local scholarships may also be available.

**PRE-K VOUCHERS**

- Pre-K Vouchers are available in Marion and Jackson counties. For more information, log onto [www.in.gov/fssa/4944.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/4944.htm).
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### Deanery Schools

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### Supporting Families / Forming young people / Transforming the future

- **Catholic Schools**
- **Archdiocese of Indianapolis**
- **Supporting Families**
- **Forming young people**
- **Transforming the future**
Spiritual development of school staffs is key to achieving ultimate goal

By Sean Gallagher

All schools encourage their faculty to develop themselves professionally and often offer opportunities for such growth. Catholic schools across central and southern Indiana also go a step further and seek to foster the faith of those who teach students and serve as administrators. This, in turn, helps Catholic school teachers and leaders pass that faith on to their students.

The faculty and staff of Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville nurture their faith during an annual retreat.

This academic year, the retreat was centered on the Church’s Holy Year of Mercy that began in December. The retreat took place on Jan. 18 at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

Educators heard a presentation on the importance of mercy in the life of faith, celebrated the Eschast, had the opportunity to experience the sacrament of penance, and walked as a group through the holy door of the Archabbbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln and said the prayers required to receive the holy year’s plenary indulgence.

“It was very powerful,” said Melinda Ernstberger, Providence’s principal. “It was a moment in time when we were taken out of our ordinary environment, and provided with a spiritual journey and reflection. The Spirit was working there.” "Leah Kelly, Providence’s director of campus ministry, thinks the retreat will help students have an encounter with Christ and grow in relationship with him and the Church.

Providing for the spiritual development of the faculty and staff furthers this goal.

“If we really want to do something extraordinary in faith for our kids, we have to start with the faculty and staff,” Ernstberger said. “We have to model it for them. We have to cheerlead it. We have to feel it deeply ourselves.”

The administrators and religious studies faculty at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis have sought to grow in their faith in order to help their students do the same by studying Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus by Catholic author Sherry Weddell.

In the 2012 book, Weddell draws on social science and polling data to show the challenge facing the Church today in helping Catholics grow in their faith and remain committed to being followers of Christ.

She then lays out an array of suggestions to help the Church help Catholics grow in their relationship with Christ, and be more intentional in living out their faith on a daily basis.

Leaders in the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools have encouraged administrators of Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana to study the book and consider its relevance for their particular situation.

Roncalli principal Chuck Weisenbach was impressed by the effect that Forming Intentional Disciples had on him and fellow school leaders.

“We’ve never had amongst our administrative team a more robust and passionate dialogue than the one we’ve had over that book, its context and what it means for us as a school and a Church,” he said. “It continually brought us back to the title and purpose of the book— forming intentional disciplies. There is no greater challenge nor greater calling or responsibility for a Catholic school than to do just that.”

Focusing on this goal, Weisenbach said, is crucial for Catholic schools in an educational setting in Indiana that has “never been more competitive.” Because parents have a broad array of educational options for their children, schools like Roncalli need to work continually on improving their academic, athletic and fine arts programs.

“That’s nice, and I’m glad we have those things,” Weisenbach said. “But if we did all of those things well and weren’t forming intentional disciples, then obviously we would have fallen woefully short.”

As director of campus ministry and chairperson of religious studies at Roncalli, Jeff Traylor works to achieve this goal at the Indianapolis South Deanery interparochial high school.

He said Forming Intentional Disciples has helped the religious studies teachers re-examine every aspect of their work in their classrooms in light of the goal of helping their students grow in their relationship with Christ and the Church.

Traylor noted, “How can we continue to make these things engage these kids in their faith, challenge them, and cause them to challenge back, so that they can learn and understand it on a personal level, not just on a factual level?”

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Archbishop shares special bond and story with seniors

By John Shaughnessy

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin feels a special connection with this year’s Catholic high school seniors in the archdiocese. “You, the Class of 2016, and I grew up together,” Archbishop Tobin told the seniors at the beginning of a special Mass for them on Dec. 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. “Three years ago, you were freshmen. Three years ago, I began my service to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. You and I grew up together. I don’t know about you, but I’ve learned lots of stuff.”

In his homily that day on the Gospel story of the multiplication of loaves and fishes, the archbishop touched upon a story that he thought the seniors had likely heard earlier in their lives—the story of a stone soup.

“The villagers in this story were starving,” Archbishop Tobin said. “A newcomer suggested that they boil water in a large pot, and put a stone in it. And he added onions and a cabbage. Finally, someone produced meat,” the archbishop said. “And when everyone gave what little they had, they had a large and nourishing meal.”

After a pause, Archbishop Tobin told the seniors, “Although there is no miracle in this story of ‘stone soup,’ it may be very much what Jesus, through today’s Gospel, is teaching the Class of 2016. Do you suppose Jesus was teaching the crowd—and especially the Class of 2016—that we already have been provided for, if only we care and love one another enough to share?”

“If we learn this, we’ll have more than enough to satisfy us. Sometimes, we have to cooperate with God—and be patient. The miracle will occur. The Lord will come. Blessed are those who are prepared to meet him. Blessed are those whose final year is a gift to their schools.”

By John Shaughnessy

Student savors the bonds with classmates and Christ

By John Shaughnessy

As one of 21 seniors at Seton Catholic High School in Richmond, Cliff Dickman savors the special bonds he has with his classmates.

“A lot of us have been together a long time,” says Cliff, who has been at Seton Catholic Schools since his pre-school days. “We’ve shared our Catholic faith, good times and a lot of memories. It’s going to be hard to leave here. The bond we’ve formed—I wouldn’t trade it for anything in the world.”

The 17-year-old member of St. Mary Parish in Richmond has the same feeling for the parochial school education he has received.

“My Catholic education has always been important to me,” Cliff says. “It’s instilled values and morals in me so I can interact with others and those in the community. Having Mass weekly is very important to me. And the prayer services we have get my thoughts deep into what Christ wants us to do. One of the messages Christ gives to each of us is to help others.”

Cliff has lived that message through a commitment to service, including preparing meals at a community food pantry for people in need.

His Catholic education has also had an impact on the three sports he plays at Seton—soccer, basketball and baseball.

“Catholic education plays a part in showing good sportsmanship, having a positive attitude and always working your hardest.”

“The values I’ve learned here are values I’ll carry with me later. When you think of what Christ has done for me and everyone else in the world, it really hits me. My faith in Christ has led me to become a better person.”

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A father’s love of Providence leads to school’s new chapel

By Chrissie Hoyland
Special to The Criterion

With the completion of its new chapel, Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville fulfilled a nearly 25-year-old dream this fall: the construction of a permanent chapel for its students.

Since the early 1990s, Providence administrators have wanted to build a chapel, and now, thanks to the generosity of several Providence donors, that dream is a reality.

Construction of the chapel was coordinated by Koetter Construction and funded in part through a generous donation from Providence donors, that dream became a reality.

The new chapel seats 120-130 students and is used regularly for morning liturgy, attended by Christa Hoyland and her husband, the late Jim Kirchdorfer. Carolyn said her husband loved Providence, and contributing to the building of a new chapel is a wonderful way to honor his memory and his love for the school where one of their children—

The new chapel is a dream come true and a great blessing for our students," Hurley said. "We are very grateful to those who have made this possible.

The chapel was previously housed in various locations on campus. In 2013, the chapel was moved to the first floor, in an office swap with the guidance office and campus store. The location was quiet and still accessible before school for morning liturgy, but the chapel was cramped. The space was needed for the relocation of the school windows, which will be set with stained glass in the coming months. The student entrance to the school building runs alongside the chapel so that students can easily access the chapel for morning worship or prayer.

The spaciousness of the new permanent chapel allows for a serene atmosphere, providing a place for students to gather in prayer and worship. The new chapel, with its large stained glass windows, creates a sense of reverence and tranquility.

The inclusion of a permanent chapel in the school’s plans is a testament to the school’s dedication to providing a holistic education. With the opening of the new chapel, students now have a dedicated space for prayer, reflection, and spiritual growth.

This new chapel marks a significant milestone for Providence Sr./Sr. High School, and its impact on the students and community is immeasurable. The school has always valued the importance of faith and spirituality in education, and the new chapel serves as a physical expression of that commitment.

With the completion of the new chapel, Providence Jr./Sr. High School can now offer a permanent and dedicated space for students to engage in religious activities, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.

As a Catholic school, the completion of the new chapel underscores the school’s commitment to providing a faith-filled education. The new chapel is a symbol of the school’s dedication to the spiritual growth of its students and its role as a beacon of faith in the community.

The new chapel, a gift that keeps giving through the generations, serves as a reminder of the importance of faith, community, and education. It is a testament to the generosity of Providence donors and the school’s commitment to providing a high-quality Catholic education for its students.

Amy Wilson is the recipient of the 2015 Saint Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese. She knows the impact that one generation has on the next.

“Each of these schools provided a working model of the characteristics necessary to provide a quality education based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his holy Church. This model was focused on a faith-driven community that strived to teach its children the meaning and values of virtues such as compassion, empathy, and hard work in an effort to shape the next generation of Catholic leaders. The overarching theme was always the need to serve others as Christ had come to serve us.”

To achieve that goal, educators must help students “develop the heart of a servant,” Wilson says. “My fellow teachers and I attempt to achieve this goal through our living example. We take every opportunity in the classroom to discuss how each action—good or bad—can shape the next generation of Catholic leaders. It is my hope that these efforts will go a long way toward providing my students with a similar quality of experience to that of my own, and will serve them well as they transition into becoming our next group of Catholic leaders.”

As a Catholic school, we are charged with the dual mission to educate the mind and nurture the spirit. The future depends on the development of future Christian leaders. Catholic education at Immaculate Heart of Mary School is not only the work of our dedicated staff, but also the support and involvement of our pastor, Fr. Bob Sims, our parents, and the community at large.

Please visit with us at our open house on Friday, Jan. 29 from 9:30 to 11 AM or Sunday, Jan. 31 from 10:30 to 12 noon to experience our 4-star, A-rated Blue Ribbon school in action. Enjoy a tour led by current students and parents, meet our fabulous educators and visit our classrooms. We look forward to sharing wonderful programs like The Leader in Me and STEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics, Engineering), and providing information about a learning environment that fosters children academically, spiritually, athletically and socially.

If you have any questions, please call Hayley Nester in the school office at (317) 255-5468.

Students and staff at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville use their new chapel for first Friday adoration, as well as for morning liturgy and the sacrament of reconciliation. The new, permanent chapel is a 25-year dream come true for the school. (Submitted photo)

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Central Catholic, 1135 E. Cameron Street, 46203, 317.783.7759
Holy Angels, 1233 St. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, 46203, 317.638.5211
Holy Cross Central, 125 N. Oriental Street, 46202, 317.638.0568
St. Anthony, 349 N. Warren, 46222, 317.636.3739
St. Philip Neri, 540 Eastern Avenue, 46201, 317.638.0134

PROVIDING QUALITY CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN CENTER-CITY INDIANAPOLIS
The compelling question came in the midst of a celebration—a celebration in which the archdiocese continued to move closer to raising more than $5.6 million this year to help children receive a Catholic education.

The question was posed by Holy Cross Father Timothy Scully, the featured speaker during the 20th annual Celebrating Catholic School Values Awards event at Union Station in Indianapolis on Oct. 26.

“Sometimes, it’s interesting when you’re thinking about the value of something to think about what our life would be like without it,” said Father Scully, the co-founder of the University of Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), which trains educators to serve in Catholic schools in economically challenged communities across the United States.

“What would be different in America today, in our Church, in our communities, if Catholic schools never existed?”

Father Scully started his answer by focusing on the impact of a Catholic education on the most vulnerable children in American society.

“It’s been shown when Catholic schools close in an urban neighborhood, crime increases, delinquency rises, urban decay sets in,” Father Scully told the 600 people at the event. “Catholic schools represent islands of hope in the midst of lives often bereft of hope, generating untold social capital.

“Our graduates are more likely to be incarcerated, and they experience far higher lifetime earnings. Moreover, in the aggregate, Catholic schools are in fact more racially and socially plural than their public school counterparts. In many of our poorest urban communities, more than 90 percent of our students are minorities and many of them are not Catholic.

“The truth of the matter is that Catholic schools are absolutely essential, sacred places serving civic purposes. Their existence and vitality are essential to the life and health of our nation.”

From an economic standpoint, Catholic schools also “save the public purse in our country more than $21 billion a year,” Father Scully noted.

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