

Catholic Schools Week & St. Mary's School

This week we celebrate the gift of Catholic Education. With parishes throughout the Archdiocese and the country, we remember the extraordinary contribution that Catholic education has made to our society, and to the Church. On the one hand, the ministry of Catholic Education has provide a service to many children who might otherwise be deprived of a first rate education. On the other hand, it has provided the Church in the United Sates with a nucleus of educated and committed Catholics.

I am a product of both public and parochial education. I attended Lincoln Elementary School in New Britain for grades K—6 (no pre-school in those days!), St. Maurice Junior High for grades 7—9 (no middle school in those days), and St. Thomas Aquinas High School for grades 10—12. As I look back, I am grateful for the public and parochial education I received.

In the public school we had excellent teachers, and we began every day by reciting the Lord's Prayer. It was a different time and a different era. I entered St. Maurice Junior High in 1954 because Monsignor Murphy had just opened the school. Tuition was \$10! He then opened, St. Thomas Aquinas High School shortly after and I entered Aquinas in 1957. The Tuition was much more expensive—\$75!

I received an excellent education in all these schools, and while in public school, I was fortunate to be part of a good religious education program. The religious instruction I received at St. Maurice and St. Thomas, however, molded and shaped my life.

We are fortunate to have one of the premiere Catholic schools in the Archdiocese that serves children from pre-k to grade 8. We are also fortunate to have the opportunity to send our children to Northwest Catholic, another strong and vibrant school.

A strong Catholic School is a blessing to a parish, and a vibrant parish is a blessing to its School. School and Parish live in a symbiotic relationship, each strengthening and supporting the other. For the past three years, I have had the opportunity to observe and participate in the life of St. Mary's School, and three things have struck me.

First, St. Mary's maintains the highest possible academic standards. How could it be otherwise? We are located in an area where the public schools are excellent, and so we must be excellent, and we are. Second, St. Mary's provides students with a rich formation in the Catholic faith. We instruct our students in every aspect of their Catholic faith. In doing so, we provide them with a sure moral compass for the future. Third, St. Mary's provides students and parents with a vibrant and nurturing community in which to grow intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, artistically, and physically.

Whether you are a public or parochial school family, give thanks during this Catholic Schools Week for the blessing that St. Mary's School is to our parish.

If you would like to know more about St. Mary's, or if you are interested in enrolling a student at St. Mary's please contact the School Office (860 658 9412). Our teachers and staff will be pleased to help you in any way they can.

Better yes, come to our **Open House on Wednesday evening, January 27th, 6:30 PM.**

Father Matera