

CATHOLIC HERALD

catholicerald.org

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Subscription Information

Phone: (414) 769-3464 • Toll Free: (877) 769-7699
\$28/year

Postmaster: Send address changes to:

Catholic Herald, PO Box 070913, Milwaukee, WI 53207-0913
Phone: (414) 769-3464

Published weekly, except first week in January, second and fourth weeks in February, second week in March, third week in April, first and third weeks in June, second and fourth weeks in July, first and third weeks in August, first week in September, second week in October, fourth week in November, and first, fourth, and fifth weeks in December.

Wisconsin Catholic Media Apostolate
3501 S. Lake Dr., St. Francis, WI 53235-0913
ISSN 1094-589X USPS 093880
Periodical postage paid at Milwaukee, WI.

Catholic Schools Fulfill Niche in Society

Catholic Schools Week gives us an opportunity to reflect on the great gift of Catholic education to the Church. Many of us are products of Catholic school.

And if the Soles Walk for Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is any indication, the affection for those years runs deep. It goes without saying the Catholic educational system has changed with the passing of the years. What is depicted by the movie “Bells of Saint Mary” (Ingrid Bergman and Bing Crosby), with religious sisters in habits filling the classrooms, occupies only a memory.

This presentation of Catholic school is rarely, if ever, encountered today by your average Catholic. Yet, the dedication and commitment of the lay Catholic teachers of today continues the mission and preserves the Catholic identity for this generation and into the future. The Catholic school is needed more than ever to counter the rising movement of secularism in our society.

The Church cherishes and upholds the truth of marriage and family life. Embedded in the relationship of husband and wife is a partnership in God’s creative plan for all of humankind.

As the Catechism states: “By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory.” (1652) “Parents are the principal and first educators of their children. In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life.” (1653)

The family, the domestic church, begins the process of educating children in the moral and spiritual life but, of course, all of us, especially parents, need the assistance of competent and trained



HERALD of HOPE
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individuals to fulfill this responsibility. The Church in her wisdom establishes the Catholic school to promote the well-being of her faithful.

There is little doubt in my mind that a Catholic education is a sacrifice economically on the family, the teachers and the parishes. Over the last decades, Catholic schools have struggled to exist. There has been a steady decline in the number of Catholic school students nationwide. But here in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the trend is being reversed. I believe this is the result of creative thinking and regional systemization, which marshal resources and professionalism to provide for quality, accessible and affordable Catholic education. And, those who have been involved in this process begin to experience the sacrifices as an investment which, like all investments, produces dividends for the students, the families, the Church and our society.

I will constantly argue that Catholic education is not private education. It has been established to promote and educate the people in the Faith. The history of Catholic education in the United States helped to establish the Catholic identity in the face of assimilation. I will always give thanks for the many religious sisters who, being dedicated to Christ and His Church, built the system of education which

contributed not only to the Catholic Church but to our nation as well, forming productive citizens.

As Americans, we continue to exercise our rights as citizens to practice our faith. With our beliefs and practices under attack, we need to maintain the strength of our vision and the ability to articulate our beliefs. The mission of the Church through Catholic education preserves the Catholic identity and assists the individual in their ultimate goal toward holiness, the common vocation for us all.

Catholic schools create an environment through which the individual learns to incorporate prayer, intellectual excellence, Catholic teaching and social responsibility in order to serve God’s intended purpose for each of us. Whether one has a student in a Catholic school program or not, it is part of the mission of the Church and therefore it is a shared responsibility. Parishes support and promote Catholic education to fulfill evangelization (spreading the Gospel as mandated by our Lord). So, together, we are training the next generation of Catholic leaders who need to be armed with a sense of their Catholicism in order to answer the questions posed by the modern world. The Catholic school programs offer students the moral, intellectual and spiritual development that creates a vision for Catholics to live in the world, knowing that they are accountable before God for their actions.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is blessed to have the support of many great school administrators who are led by Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Cepelka and her Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office. The teachers who are in

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● **SATURDAY, FEB. 1**

MI (Knights of the Immaculata) Prayer Group: 10 a.m., Chapel at St. Anthony High School, 4807 S. Second St., Milwaukee. Prayer group promoting Marian consecration. Rosary, renewal of consecration, study of writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe. Use south entrance to school. ImmaculataVillage.org.

● **SUNDAY, FEB. 2**

Sunday TV Mass: 5:30 a.m. on WITI-TV channel 6 and 9 a.m. on WCGV-TV channel 24. For Catholics unable to attend a parish Mass due to illness, frailty, caregiving for loved ones, inclement weather or other grave circumstances. Online Mass video: www.heartofthenation.org. Information: 414-475-4700.

● **MONDAY, FEB. 3**

Sursum Corda: 6:30 p.m., St. Stanislaus, 524 W. Historic Mitchell St. Mass, followed by formation and social for young adults.

● **WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5**

Cor Jesu: 7 to 9 p.m., St. Robert, 2200 E. Capitol Drive, Shorewood. Prayer with music, silence, reconciliation, 8 p.m. Mass, followed by social in the parking lot.

● **THURSDAY, FEB. 6**

Indoor Prayer Labyrinth: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, 12700 W. Howard Ave., New Berlin, 6:30 to 8 p.m. 262-782-6760.

Healing the Whole Person: 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center, 3501 S. Lake Drive, St. Francis. Join Dr. Bob Schuchts and co-presenter Sr. Miriam James Heidland for the return of this popular conference that introduces Catholics to the theology of God's healing, love and forgiveness. For more information, visit jpiihealingcenter.org.

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Marquette College of Nursing Gifts Provide \$6.3M

Amid a growing nursing shortage across the state and nation, Marquette's College of Nursing recently received more than \$6.3 million from generous benefactors to support scholarships for nursing students and the college's direct entry nursing master's program. Marquette nursing alumna Dorothy Krawczyk gifted \$4.7 million to student scholarships through her estate, nursing alumna Alice Stecker contributed \$1 million toward scholarship support, and the Helene Fuld Health Trust provided a \$675,000 grant to support the College of Nursing's direct entry nursing program. This combined support opens doors for future caregivers at a time when a robust student-nurse pipeline is in high demand. "These generous gifts will help ensure more Marquette nurses are out in the

world caring for their patients and leading complex health systems in the Jesuit tradition of *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person," said Dr. Janet Krejci, dean of the College of Nursing. "We are grateful to Dorothy, Alice and the Helene Fuld Health Trust for their commitment to nursing education."

"What's truly wonderful about our Marquette alumni and friends is their commitment to opening doors for the next generation of students," said President Michael R. Lovell. "These generous gifts to benefit the health of our community are helping us achieve our *Beyond Boundaries* strategic plan, providing a pathway for Marquette to be recognized among the most innovative and accomplished Catholic and Jesuit universities in the world."

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their classrooms motivating the students to strive to reach their God-given potential and, of course, our pastors and associates who understand the importance of visiting their schools, interacting with the students, offering the sacraments and witnessing to the importance of living the faith are blessings as well.

During Catholic Schools Week, please take the opportunity to examine the accomplishments of your Catholic school. If your heart moves you, seek to become involved in support of your school — I know it will be met with open arms. And, definitely pray for the continued success of Catholic schools, and for those who have benefitted from Catholic education in the past. Take a few moments to

remember your teachers and school staff who have had an impact on your lives. Also, recapture the memories of your classmates who shared the journey with you in those early days of formation.

To those parents contemplating sending their children to Catholic school, I strongly urge you to make that significant investment into their development and formation in the Faith. This decision will reinforce a direction that will not only challenge your child intellectually but will offer them a blueprint for living a full life with God now in this world and with an eye on the next.

In the end, we are all seeking our path to heaven through Jesus Christ and His Church. Catholic school education enlightens our way.



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INSPIRATIONAL BOOK "Silencing the Night" by Catherine Demers. A story about finding faith through grief. For sale on Amazon Kindle in ebook or paperback.

HELP WANTED

SACRED HEART SEMINARY AND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (SHSST) seeks a Roman Catholic priest for a full-time, graduate-level seminary appointment to serve as our Vice President for Formation Programs starting July 2020. For more information, please send an email as soon as possible to hr@shsst.edu. The application submission deadline is January 31, 2020.

**February 6 Issue:
Senior Focus and Retirement Living**