Catholic Schools Week will be celebrated January 30-February 5, 2005 in all U.S. Catholic Schools. This year’s theme is “Faith in Every Student.” The mission of Catholic Schools – building a strong foundation for a lifetime of faith, learning and service – has never been more important. Schools across the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and throughout the nation will celebrate together our message of hope and faith in every child’s future.

Catechesis for the Whole Community

“If a household is not a holy place, we have failed” so began a presentation by Bill Huebsch, to Catholic educators and pastoral leaders on the topic of Whole Community Catechesis at the annual winter meeting of faith formation leaders on January 13, at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus. Bill Huebsch, a very popular and engaging speaker and nationally recognized leader in catechetical ministry, has in recent years devoted much of his work to whole community catechesis building upon the message of the 1997 General Directory for Catechesis that “the whole community is the origin, locus, and goal of catechesis.”

The meeting, attended by nearly 200 persons, marked Huebsch’s second visit to the archdiocese since last August when he first introduced whole community catechesis to educational administrators at their annual summer conference. The Office of Catholic Education invited him back to explain, to whole parish teams, how to “do” whole community catechesis. It is a mistake, he says, for parish leaders to think that the parish, however vibrant it may be, is an entity unto itself. Instead, the parish is a resource to the entire community. With only 25 percent of Catholics attending Mass regularly, parishes cannot simply provide good programs for a small number but must be focused outward, supporting those who think of themselves and their ordinary lives as somehow not holy and the church or parish as the holy place. Citing some of the known reasons for such thinking - divorce and remarriage outside the church, different religions within the family unit, broken families, and other circumstances - Huebsch calls for the parish to engage the entire community, building up the Body of Christ in small households of faith.

Church documents have always stated that parents are the first teachers of the faith, but too often, Huebsch says, catechetical leaders have led parents to believe that catechesis is better left to the professionals. It is time for a new vision of how we hand on the faith - a vision of a partnership between parish and families of every shape and form. This vision requires a conversion of mind and heart guided by the Holy Spirit and the authentic teaching authority of the Church.

Huebsch is quick to note that whole community catechesis does not displace the systematic catechesis called for in lifelong religious education. He had praise for the Catechism-based archdiocesan religion curriculum for all grade levels and was especially pleased with the fact that the learning standards for children and youth are extended further by a full archdiocesan curriculum for adults. In addition, the curriculum guide contains the elements of a partnership between the parish and family for each grade level. With these tools already available, catechetical leaders can begin to develop whole community catechesis within the groups they already serve. They can offer small parish retreats with the opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. They can provide systematic catechesis with an adult-centered focus.

Finally, Huebsch makes it clear that all catechesis has its source in the Paschal Mystery, the living celebration of the Eucharist in the Sunday liturgy. “The Sunday liturgy needs to go home” to households where there is a focus on the living Word of God in family prayer and holiness in the real world.

Bill Huebsch’s presentation was sponsored by Harcourt Religion Publishers. More information on whole community catechesis can be found at www.harcourtreligion.com
2005 Tribute to Teachers

The fourth annual Mother Theodore Guerin Awards Tribute to Teachers will take place on Wednesday, February 23, at Primo Banquet and Conference Center, Indianapolis. The awards are named for Blessed Mother Theodore Guerin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, whose dedication to excellence in teaching continues to inspire Catholic educators 165 years later. Each of the seventy-one Catholic schools in the archdiocese is asked to select one outstanding teacher based on a set of exemplary teacher criteria in spiritual, relational, instructional, and leadership areas. In addition to the awards for exemplary teachers, the Tribute to Teachers event will also recognize those individuals who have taught in the archdiocesan schools for 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 or more years. Archbishop Daniel Buechlein and Executive Director of Catholic Education Mickey Lentz will present the awards to the 2005 Mother Theodore Guerin Award recipients.

They are: Diane Alerding, St. Matthew; Matthew Alley, Holy Angels; Marilyn Amberger, St. Louis, Batesville; Donna Aragon, Christ the King; Michele Barlow, Pope John XXIII, Madison; Nancy Bemis, Roncalli H.S.; Joan Berkopes, St. Mark; Kerry Blandford, St. Simon; Annetta Brack, St. Michael, Brookville; Kimberly Brooks, St. Mary, North Vernon; David Brown, Seton Catholic H.S.; Julie Cahalan, St. Paul, Sellersburg; Andy Cain, Cardinal Ritter H.S.; Sue Catton, Holy Spirit; Mary Ann Chamberlin, St. Roch; Terry Clem, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany; Pamela Daughtery, St. Mary, New Albany; Trudie Disque, St. Ambrose, Seymour; Jeanie Ellenberger, St. Michael, Greenfield; Angela Fuller, St. Gabriel, Connersville; Sue Gerth, St. Bartholomew, Columbus; Erin Hawkins, Bredenue Jesuit; Michael Heneghan, St. Joan of Arc; Lillian Kelley, St. Andrew and St. Rita Catholic Academy; Cheryl Kitchin, Seton Elementary, Richmond; Joan Koebbe, Holy Cross Central; Melinda Koerner, St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyd's Knobs; Patty Koors, Immaculate Heart of Mary; Mary Krause, St. Michael, Indianapolis; Ellen Landers, Bishop Chatard H.S.; Mary Lou Lee, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis; Sue Lynch, St. Jude; Glenn Mauger, Cathedral H.S.; Mary McFadden, Our Lady of Lourdes; Tracy McKee, St. Christopher; Deborah Moorman, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford; Ted Nelson McGill, Our Lady of Providence H.S., Clarksville; Judy Nichols, Fr. Thomas Secchia Memorial H.S.; Paula Owen, St. Malachy, Brownsburg; Camela Oyler, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg; Madonna Paskash, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington; Patrice Payne, St. Thomas Aquinas; Chris Peek, Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ; Mary Pickreller, St. Anthony, Clarksville; Amy Ruberg, Oldenburg Academy; Pamela Scheck, St. Luke; Shawn Schroeder, St. Joseph, Shelbyville; Jan Sexton, Our Lady of the Greenwood; Anna Sharpe, Holy Name, Beech Grove; Jackie Shockley, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville; Jennifer Sliger, St. Mary, Rushville; Donna Stewart, St. Mary, Greensburg; Andrea Strehl, St. Barnabas; Beth Summers, Holy Family, New Albany; Barbara Taylor, Central Catholic; Rosemary Taylor, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute; Teresa Torline, Shawe Memorial H.S., Madison; Ellie Trahin, St. Monica; Dana Van Deuren, St. Pius X; Karen Wagner, St. Therese of the Little Flower; Sarah Watson, St. Gabriel, Indianapolis; Mary Ann Western, St. Susanna; Leanne Wheeler, All Saints; Dallas Wright, St. Patrick, Terre Haute.

New National Directory for Catechesis

On January 10, 2005, Executive Director Mickey Lentz, Associate Executive Director Harry Dudley, and Associate Director Karen Oddi attended a daylong symposium for the National Directory for Catechesis in Baltimore, MD. The event, sponsored by the Bishops Committee for Catechesis and hosted by Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, Committee Chair, featured major addresses by Bishops Leonard P. Blair, Donald W. Wuerl, and Richard J. Malone, committee members. Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes facilitated a panel in response to the major presentations, and Archbishop John G. Vlazny presided at the Eucharistic Liturgy. The bishops announced that, on December 16, 2004, notification of the recognition, or official approval, of the document was received from the Holy See. The projected publication date for the National Directory for Catechesis is May 1, 2005. The text will be available in both English and Spanish. In addition, there will be two different summaries, one of about thirty pages for catechists and teachers and another shorter summary for parish bulletins and other general use. A leader’s guide and other materials for promulgating the document in dioceses and parishes are also being prepared. Publication of the new directory for the United States of America will mark a major milestone in the renewal of catechesis. It flows from the 1997 General Directory for Catechesis and offers guidance in the practical and pastoral application of the Pastoral and Catechesis in the Catholic Church in order to achieve a balance between content and method in catechesis. As the publication date grows closer, more information will be posted on the OCE website.

TAP News

The first four Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) pilot schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis received their first performance pay awards on December 14. The schools are: Secchia Memorial High School, Saint Barnabas, Saint Jude and Saint Lawrence. The teachers came together at the Catholic Center to celebrate dedication, hard work, and most of all, results. A total of over $145,000 was awarded to the TAP participants in these schools who met the performance criteria. Performance-Based Accountability and Market-Driven Compensation are two of the four TAP principles that also include Multiple Career Paths and Ongoing Professional Growth. The program is part of Project EXCEED, a school improvement initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. and other generous corporate and individual donors.

Thirty-seven educators from the eight TAP schools in the archdiocese attended the fifth annual TAP conference in Colorado in November sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation. Participants had the opportunity to observe teachers in their classrooms, cluster groups and in leadership team meetings. After these observations, they debriefed with the teachers from the Eagle County (CO) TAP schools. Keynote speaker, Dr. Herbert J. Walberg, Professor Emeritus of Education and Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago, shared insights and current research on how educators must evaluate teaching strategies to better prepare students for a lifetime of learning in the 21st century.
The OCE Policy Project

The Office of Catholic Education is embarking on the “Policy Project.” Over many years, various archdiocesan policies, administrative rules and policy guidance have been collected in a policy manual, various handbooks and guides, or in some cases, have not been formally collected at all. Many of the policies and rules are also outdated and in need of revision or deletion.

The onset of easy digital communication allows written materials to be stored as electronically searchable documents or databases. It thus becomes possible to store policies promulgated by the Archbishop through the Archdiocesan Education Commission (AEC), the accompanying administrative rules, the history and rationale, and the application guidance for administrators in one “virtual place” for easy reference with no more searching in two or three different books or files for the needed information. A few key words and keystrokes should be enough to find documents on most any subject that exists in the database.

This is a long-term project that will take several years and will never really be complete, as the need for new policies and administrative guidance will continue. It started this fall as a new Policy Review Committee was appointed from the AEC and a revised policy on “policy consultation” was proposed. The proposed policy calls for new or revised policies to be considered first by the administrators in the Office of Catholic Education (OCE Field Staff), who will put these into a standardized format, and then by the Policy Review Committee of the AEC. Simultaneously, with this step, the organizations of professional administrators, the Archdiocesan Principals’ Association and the Association of Parish Administrators of Religious Education (APARE), will provide input on the proposed policies. The policy documents will then be revised and posted for all constituents for a period of time on the OCE website with a notice in the weekly OCE-notes (e-mail). After revisions, the policy will be taken to the AEC in regular session. They may make final revisions and recommend the policy to the Archbishop through the Executive Director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation. If the Archbishop approves the policy, it will be promulgated and become binding on all education and faith formation programs in the archdiocese.

It is the responsibility of the local education and/or faith formation administrators to make commission/board members, parents and parishioners aware of policy implications. Promulgated policies will be kept in searchable format on the OCE website and will also be made available on CD-Rom. There will be no need to wait until the entire body of policies is complete, as these will be added as they are approved. We encourage all pastors, administrators and commission/board members to actively participate and contribute to the policy consultation process.

Celebrating Catholic School Values

The ninth annual Celebrating Catholic School Values Scholarship and Career Awards dinner held October 27, featured the Honorable Alan C. Page as keynote speaker and raised over $345,000 – a new record – for financial aid to students in Catholic schools. J. Timothy McGinley, past honoree and chairperson for the event, said that over 2,500 students have been helped to attend Catholic schools from the previous eight events. Honored for their Career Achievements were: Sr. Dominica Doyle, OSF; Mrs. Mary Kenney; Dr. and Mrs. James Nolan; and, Rick Pfleger. Rev. Boniface Hardin, OSB, received the Community Service Award. We are grateful to our many generous sponsors.

OCE Website

Don’t forget to check out our new OCE Website at www.archindy.org/oce/. Improvements are constantly being made, so check back often.
State Football Championship

Congratulations to the Roncalli Rebels, Class 4A State Football Champions for the third year in a row at the RCA Dome. They beat Wawasee High School to win their eighth state championship since 1985. Congratulations also to the Cardinal Ritter Raiders who were the runners-up in the Class A State Championship against Seeger High School in their second straight bid for a title. And, bravo to Bishop Chartard’s Trojans, who made it all the way to the semistate before being stopped by Heritage Hills, preventing their bid for a fourth straight Class 3A football title.

Archdiocesan 2004 – 2005 ISTEP+ Results

Our students continue to perform well on the ISTEP+. Although all students in grades 3rd through 10th in archdiocesan schools took the Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress (ISTEP+) in September 2004, the results for grades 4, 5, 9 and 10 will not be released until March of 2005, because the passing scores are being aligned to the new Indiana Academic Standards. Just prior to the holidays, the archdiocese did receive 2004 - 2005 ISTEP+ results for 5,219 students in grades 3, 6, and 8. These grades are already aligned to the standards. Shown in the chart is the percentage of students at each grade level that passed both the language arts/English and mathematics parts of the ISTEP+ test compared to the total state average and the non-public school average. The percentage of students passing both parts of the ISTEP+ test compared to the total state average and the non-public school average. The percentage of students passing both parts of the ISTEP+ test in the archdiocese ranges from 80 percent at 3rd grade, 86 percent at 6th grade, and 85 percent at 8th grade. The trend this year continues the past performance of students in the archdiocese, which is that students passing the test improves as students move up from one grade to the next. Simply stated, the longer the student is in the archdiocesan schools the greater the improvement in student performance. Keep in mind that the private and archdiocesan school results are also included in the overall State of Indiana scores and tend to bring them up.

Math Counts

Math Counts is a one-credit hour (16 contact hours) college-level class for Catholic school teachers who teach mathematics. Teachers in archdiocesan schools have expressed a desire for a course that focuses on brain compatible strategies for mathematics. As more schools write school improvement goals that focus on problem-solving and mathematical computation, there is a need for more professional development in these areas.

Math teachers are continually seeking ways to improve their instruction. Teachers with a strong desire to reach all students need additional strategies that focus on a variety of ways to meet the needs of diverse learners. In addition, teachers need methods that can be utilized to teach students problem-solving skills. Critical thinking is a vital skill for students, yet many teachers do not have a strong background in this area. This course will assist teachers in developing the necessary knowledge base and strategies to teach students different problem-solving methods.

Math Counts will focus on the standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). These standards address not only the material that students should learn, but also methods that may be utilized to teach this curriculum. The curriculum that NCTM advocates is from the same material that the State of Indiana used as the basis for the State Mathematics Standards; therefore, the two are very similar and compatible. The course will provide background information, as well as differentiated instructional methods that are based on the latest brain research about how children learn mathematics. A multi-sensory approach to the teaching of mathematics will be utilized, with extra emphasis placed on the use of problem-solving methods to teach computation. Teachers will be provided with activities for each of the NCTM Standards.

Math Counts is sponsored by Project EXCEED. Teachers who wish to take the course for one hour of college credit may do so through Marian College. For more information, please contact Kathy Mears at kmears@archindy.org or 592-4051 or 1(800)382-9836 extension 4051.

ISTEP+ 2004 - 2005 Combined Results

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Blue Ribbon Schools
Go To Washington D.C.

Representatives of the six schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis that earned No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Awards for 2004 from the U.S. Department of Education traveled to Washington, DC on November 4-5, to receive their awards. The schools honored are: St. Mary School, North Vernon; St. Mary School, New Albany; St. Barnabas School, St. Christopher School, St. Luke School and Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

On November 4, the school administrators and teacher representatives were featured at a reception at the Georgetown Headquarters of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). They heard an address from Raymond J. Simon, Assistant Secretary of Education, and participated in critical issues panels.

Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, addressed the honorees on November 5, at an awards luncheon. Each school then received its Blue Ribbon School award plaque. They were among representatives of only 50 non-public and 106 public schools recognized for 2004.

The new No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. The schools also go through an extensive application and screening process before being chosen by a panel in a competitive process.

A total of fifteen schools in the archdiocese, including the six honored this year and four honored last year have earned a total of nineteen Blue Ribbons since 1985.

Creating an Hispanic Presence

The halls are filled with Buenos Dias and Good Mornings as the parents drop off their children to start another day of classes. This is part of the bilingual and multicultural environment at several center city schools. In the last five years the Hispanic community in Indianapolis has grown exponentially and parents are seeking alternatives to public education for their children. It is only natural that this community seeks out Catholic Education as the Hispanic culture has been strongly influenced by Catholic tradition and values. Currently almost 25 percent of the students at All Saints Catholic School are Hispanic and St. Philip Neri Catholic School is quickly approaching 50 percent.

For the past year and-a-half the Hispanic Services, an initiative supported by Project EXCEED, has been creating a presence in the school community and has served as a link between the school and Hispanic families. The Hispanic Services program facilitates the communication for parents and students and is currently developing programs and services to allow students to receive the highest quality educational experience possible. This involves a full collaborative approach between administrators, teachers, and all school staff and requires a willingness to understand the requirements of dual language learners.

Students who have just arrived in the United States and/or are still learning English are currently receiving English instruction. Liturgies are being celebrated bilingually, and Christmas and Spring programs reflect the cultural richness in the schools. Communication to families is now being accomplished in Spanish. English classes are also being offered to mothers of students and, although the class concentrates on learning the language, discussion often centers on the day-to-day challenges of raising children in a bicultural and bilingual environment.

Within a year-and-a-half the Hispanic Services has been able to develop a presence in the school, but there is much more work to be done as the Hispanic community grows and as teachers face students in the classroom who will require an approach sensitive to how language and culture contribute to the learning process...poco a poco (little by little).
People Making a Difference

Over the course of my many years in Catholic education I have realized that it is nearly impossible to single out individuals who are truly making a difference in Catholic education, since our ministry is so collaborative that each and every person in his or her own way is making a difference and bringing about inspiring and wonderful results.

We have hundreds of professional educators and paid staff members who consistently strive for excellence in what they do. However, their good work depends on and is interwoven with the dedication of hundreds more volunteers who are committed to helping us and enriching our work as educators. Volunteers, young and old from every walk of life, serve the mission of Catholic education and faith formation in countless ways - as coaches, catechists, librarians, nurses, donors, tutors, fund-raisers, and many more.

As we celebrate Catholic education across the nation this month, I especially want to applaud the dedication and hard work of our high school boards and parish educational commissions who continue to make the Archdiocese of Indianapolis a model for the country in educational governance. I certainly want to acknowledge my own advisors - the Archdiocesan Education Commission (AEC) whose members offer a multitude of gifts to our ministry and serve unconditionally. I personally thank all those who serve Catholic education today and salute all those past leaders upon whose accomplishments they are building for the future. Presently serving on the Archdiocesan Education Commission are: Kevin Hoolehan, President; Rev. John Beitans, Vice-President; Milly Brehob, Secretary; Mark Bohnert; Cathy Dezelan; Christopher Felts; William Kuntz; Larry Johnson; Ken LaRose; Rosemarie Milto; John Ruckelshaus; Kenneth Saxon; Addison Simpson; Ann Steiner; William Sylvester; Roger Trahin; and Greg Ulm.

I challenge each of you to encourage your outgoing parish commission members to join us at the archdiocesan level. It is indeed a rewarding experience!

Office of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410