Catholic Schools Celebrate Service
Catholic Schools Week ~ January 25-31

“Celebrate Service,” the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2009 provides a perfect opportunity for our archdiocese to focus on one integral facet of Catholic education. Service-learning projects are thoroughly grounded in the themes of Catholic Social Teaching. From valuing the dignity of the person, to caring for God’s creation, the extraordinary service provided by our schools is the result of serious contemplation, creative thinking and reflection involving concern for our world and its people.

The call to service is evident in both our elementary and secondary schools. Almost universal is the periodic collection of food for those less fortunate. Whether the food is for a food pantry, the Little Sisters of the Poor, or other groups expressing need, our schools are ongoing contributors.

A focused service group of fourth and fifth graders in one of the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA) meet after school under the direction of an employee to read and discuss Catholic Social Teaching and to spearhead such activities as a clothing drive, a community environmental warning campaign regarding the emerald ash borer, or providing cards and letters for shut-ins. All of the projects are student initiated and student driven.

There are also wide-ranging activities for students involving personal contacts outside of the immediate school/parish community. Students visit nursing homes to entertain and interact with residents. One secondary school has groups that perform errands for senior citizens and shut-ins, another group that tutors at two MTCA schools as well as students who volunteer at the Municipal Gardens and Senate Square. At this same school a group has “adopted” a local park and another provides grass cutting and repairs for vacant homes in the area. Another high school has sponsored over 40 trips in 17 years to perform service in one Appalachian town. These activities are representative of what is happening in all of our high schools!

Our schools also respond to natural disasters. Elementary students have worked to provide needed supplies for those affected by recent storm damage, while secondary students have made repeated trips to flood-ravaged Gulf Coast areas to assist in the post-Katrina rebuilding efforts.

Catholic schools also encourage service by others. At the same time the schools are providing services, they are also recipients of service, providing opportunities for hundreds of parents and parishioners to participate significantly in the life of the school.

The theme for CSW 2009 is one with great meaning for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. We should indeed celebrate service!
The Numbers Tell The Story.....

The thirteenth annual Celebrating Catholic School Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards Dinner held on November 5, 2008 at the Indiana Convention Center was once again a big success. By the numbers:

1100+ Guests/Sponsors attended
7 Platinum Partners contributed $15,000 each
2 Gold Partners contributed $10,000 each
11 Silver Partners contributed $5,000 each
30 Bronze Partners contributed $1,750 each
73 School and Parish Partners
37 Contributing and In-Kind Partners
$300,000+ raised for needs-based tuition assistance from 2008 Event
$4,100,000+ has been raised from the past 13 events
150+ books signed by Keynote Speaker, Author, Mary Higgins Clark
4 Career Achievement Awards presented to:
   Hon. J. Terrence Cody
   Ronald F. Jones
   Richard J. (Dick) Powell
   Sr. Marie Kevin Tighe, SP
1 Community Service Award presented to:
   D. Anthony (Tony) Watt
71 Distinguished persons honored over the past 13 events
41 Catholic schools where eligible students will benefit

Jubilee Events ~ Please Plan Now to Attend!

Confirmation: 2,500 teens and 300 adults will have a unique experience of the Sacrament of Confirmation on May 3, 2009 at the 175th Jubilee Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium. They will have an experience of the larger Church that for many will be once-in-a-lifetime as they celebrate this initiatory sacrament. Specific instructions for our 151 parish contacts for Confirmation will soon be forthcoming with frequent updates to ensure a meaningful and memorable celebration.

Acknowledgment of First Holy Communicants: 302 second-graders (a boy and a girl from each of our 151 parishes and missions) will enter in procession at our 175th Jubilee Mass on May 3, 2009 at Lucas Oil Stadium. All additional first communicants are welcome to attend this Mass seated with their families. The procession of the first communicants and the special seating reserved for them will provide a powerful visual image highlighting the source and summit of our Catholic Faith – the Most Holy Eucharist.

High School Senior Mass with Archbishop Daniel

Nearly 1200 graduating seniors from most of the Catholic high schools in the archdiocese celebrated a special Mass with Archbishop Daniel Buechlein at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral on December 10, 2008. It was standing room only as the Archbishop asked the students, “If folks were to happen onto this Mass - if they were to meet you seniors this morning, would it make a difference? If they met you, the Class of 2009, would they find some meaning in the promise of Jesus that if they come to Him, their burden will be light? Would they know the commandment Jesus gave us: ‘Love one another?’ Would they find you are young people who care? Or, are there strings attached?”

The Archbishop went on to say, “I pray that because of your experience in our Catholic high schools and catechetical programs, no matter where you go or who you become in your journey through life, you will always be men and women of hope. This is the heart of my message to you this morning: Be women and men of hope for a lonely society looking for people who care. Blessed Mother Teresa once said the greatest poverty in America is loneliness of Spirit.”

He challenged the seniors to “dare to be different” in a secular culture – to be people of faith. The annual Senior Mass with the Archbishop has become a tradition anticipated by the students. Each year, the Archbishop includes this reminder: “You need to pray every day. If you do, everything will be okay.”

Catholic Schools Week Mass

Catholic schools have been invited to bring ten students each to the archdiocesan Mass to celebrate Catholic Schools Week on Thursday, January 29, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Students will be wearing their school uniforms. About 800 people are expected to attend. Principal celebrant will be Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, OSB, Archbishop of Indianapolis, along with priests of the archdiocese.

This year’s theme for Catholic Schools Week is “Catholic Schools Celebrate Service,” and schools have been encouraged to sponsor special service activities during the week. The staff of the Office of Catholic Education will be serving hot chocolate and rolls to clients of the Catholic Charities Crisis Center each morning during Catholic Schools Week.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

July 2006 marked the publication of the long-awaited United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (USCCA). Our U.S. Bishops promote this as an essential tool for evangelization, catechesis and ongoing faith formation. Three pilot projects are underway in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to familiarize various catechetical leaders with the riches of the USCCA. At Central Catholic School the teachers are participating in a discussion forum facilitated by Becky Douglas, campus minister for the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies. Principal Sara Browning remarked, “The teachers actually look forward to the challenge of the next meeting.” Mary Lynn Cavanaugh, pastoral associate/DRE at St. Mark Parish, Indianapolis, is leading an online discussion with five other parish administrators of religious education across the archdiocese. Mary Lynn sees the benefit of catechetical leaders studying the Catechism: “They are being formed first so that they can subsequently form others in its truths.” Finally, a group of about 20 youth ministers are reading and studying the USCCA as a component of their certification process. Kay Seville, Youth Ministry Program Coordinator observed, “There is great interest among youth ministers to become confident in their knowledge of the Church’s teachings.”
Learning Spanish to Build Relationships

It is not uncommon now to hear ¡Buenos días!, ¡hola!, ¿como se llama, in the halls of the Catholic Center since Center staff members participated in Reality Spanish for All, a beginning conversational Spanish course. The purpose of the course was to enable the learners to enter into relationships with Spanish speakers by using basic conversational skills; to understand the culture of people from countries where Spanish is the primary language; to confront the fears that inhibit learners from using the language; and, of course, to have fun in the learning process.

Staff who participated demonstrated a commitment not only to learn the language, but a profound desire to breakdown barriers to connecting with Spanish speakers, especially with our own Catholic brothers and sisters. We prayed in Spanish, joked in Spanish, listened to a visiting priest from El Salvador in Spanish, and shared how the learners used the language between classes. We opened ourselves to engage with the Hispanic/Latino community and at the same time, we formed a new community of language learners.

The participants’ thoughts of the Reality Spanish experience are best expressed by them directly:

The Reality Spanish class brought new learning – not just vocabulary and essential phrases, but learning about culture and aspects of our Catholic faith from the Hispanic/Latino culture.

Peggy Elson, OCE

I especially appreciated the highly vocal character of the class to help us overcome our fear of speaking another language, the opportunity to learn about customs in a variety of Spanish-speaking cultures, and most of all, the upbeat, positive tone of the whole experience.

Charles Gardner, Office of Worship

Reality Spanish was a wonderful opportunity to quickly learn some Spanish to be able to communicate with Spanish speaking people. Valerie Sperka, Catholic Charities

I can honestly say this class was never dull or boring! I had a beginning learning experience of a beautiful language prompting a desire in me to learn more. Jeanette Hall, OCE

I gained a deeper understanding of the Hispanic community – their language, customs and culture – that will help me to interact more respectfully and effectively. Ed Isakson, Human Resources

While we wanted to end the course in Acapulco, we concluded the experience by singing Spanish Christmas music, enjoying delicious tamales, writing a Christmas story using our new vocabulary, and congratulating the students on job well done (¡buen hecho estudiantes!).

Margarita Solis Deal, Program Coordinator

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Freeway Schools and Pillars Process

Recently, the Indiana State Board of Education unanimously approved the application of the archdiocese for 66 of our schools to become “Freeway Schools.” That is, their state accreditation status was changed to “free” them from some state regulations regarding accredited non-public schools.

A major impact of this change is in school improvement planning. The archdiocese will now be able to address school improvement in a manner more suited to our needs as private religious schools. Our revised planning process is entitled “Pillars” referring to the three pillars of Catholic schools: Catholic Identity, Academics, and Institutional Development. The process was adapted from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) AdvancED Process. Most schools will also simultaneously seek NCA Accreditation. (See a memo explaining Pillars on the OCE Website, www.archindy.org/oce/.

Items of Interest, Miscellaneous.)

A key component of this process is that local parish school commissions and high school boards will now be responsible for certain aspects of the plan with school administrators, especially in the areas of institutional development using a Standards Assessment Readiness Instrument adapted from NCA. The archdiocesan Catholic Identity Instrument will also be used as a standards assessment to consider and plan for those aspects that make a school distinctively Catholic.

Each school is required to set three goals, one in each of the “Pillars” areas. The schools may set additional goals as well, but the plan calls for critical focus on a few realistic goals. The planning/implementation cycle is three years corresponding to the state timeline for accreditation, but the plans will be reviewed annually, including an annual progress report.

The Office of Catholic Education will now act as an “accrediting agent” for schools in the archdiocese in conjunction with the NCA and the Indiana Department of Education and will monitor reports of progress toward goals.

The Pillars Process should enable schools to create unique school improvement plans most likely to address local Catholic school needs such as Catholic identity, enrollment, development and finances as well as student performance, and help bring about true school improvement.

“Life is Worth Living…and Defending!”

Annual March for Life ~ January 20-23, 2009

Washington, DC

• Coordinated by archdiocesan Pro-Life Office, Youth Ministry and Young Adult and Campus Life Ministry
• Nearly 800 participants from the archdiocese attended the March in Washington DC this year on the cusp of the Presidential Inauguration
• They were present, praying and protesting peacefully as the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was decided in Congress
• Archdiocesan high school students and young adults arrived by bus, car and a donated plane!
• Archbishop Daniel Buechlein and eight priests lead the marchers in Holy Mass
• Supporters at home prayed the Universal Rosary for all participants

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart: I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” Jeremiah 1:5
CONSUMED

“It’s not about me anymore,” I thought to myself as I touched the cloak of Christ in the Eucharistic Prayer procession. With tears streaming down my face, I finally realized with all my heart that Christ is what it was about all along. It was then in September of 2004 that I decided to make my faith my own. I had walked into the very first CONSUMED Retreat as a Catholic, daughter of a youth minister (Dave Gehrich), an active member at my parish (St. Vincent de Paul, Shelbyville) and a pretty well-behaved teenage girl. But, something in my faith was missing. I had everything I needed to be a good Catholic – even the perk of a dad who was also a youth minister – so I wondered why my faith wasn’t clicking with me. God spoke to me at that very first CONSUMED, telling me it was about Him, not me; and finally I knew I had to make my faith about Him completely. That weekend, I walked out of the gym completely in love with Christ, knowing that CONSUMED was exactly where I was meant to be. Little did I know then that CONSUMED would become an even bigger part of my life.

Fast forward to November 2008, the seventh CONSUMED. I took my place at the front of the gym-turned-chapel to give the Girls’ Chastity Talk. I was nervous and kept thinking how “full circle” it had come. Four years ago, I was sitting in a gym listening to a Chastity Talk at CONSUMED, and today I was giving the talk. Christ really had worked in me at the first CONSUMED. Now it was my turn to tell these girls not only about chastity, but about the love of God.

I have attended all seven CONSUMED Retreats as a participant and most recently as a member of the C4 Team. My experiences have been different at each retreat. I experienced the peacefulness of being surrounded by Christ. I experienced the joy of singing and dancing for God with 400 teenagers. I experienced tearful reflection during the Eucharistic Prayer procession. But, most of all I experienced and will continue to experience being completely CONSUMED by Christ every day.

Megan Gehrich, Marian College

Archdiocesan 2008 Fall ISTEP+ Results

Our Students Maintain Improvement on the ISTEP+

In September 2008, 11,500 students in grades 3 through 10 from 71 Catholic Schools within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis took the Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress (ISTEP+). They will also take the test again in March as the state transitions to spring testing. For the last eight years, students have shown and been able to maintain growth in their language arts/English and mathematics proficiency on the Indiana academic standards compared to the state of Indiana. The slight decline is due to no longer testing of grade 9 students and phasing out of ISTEP for grade 10 in favor of the end of course assessments.

(See Chart at Right)

The average of archdiocesan students at each grade level passing both the language arts/English and mathematics is above both the non-public school and Indiana state averages. The archdiocesan percentages range from 86 percent at grade 3 to 92 percent at grade 8. The trend this year continues: the longer students remain in archdiocesan schools the greater their growth in student proficiency.

(See Chart at Left)
Theology on Tap

Theology on Tap (ToT) is a social and educational organization that welcomes young adults (aged 21-35) of all faiths to meet, listen, and discuss the beliefs of the Catholic Church and how these relate to their everyday lives. Our guest speakers are well-educated professionals that range from CEOs to Church leaders dedicated to enriching the faith. We try to accommodate all of the Indianapolis metro area by meeting in a central location in downtown Indianapolis (currently Vito’s on Penn at 20 N. Pennsylvania Street). Our members enjoy a one-hour presentation while having dinner and an adult beverage if desired. Archbishop Daniel was a recent guest speaker.

During a series of six bi-weekly meetings (a “Six-Pack”), Theology on Tap offers a rich variety of topics designed to connect young adults with one another and the guest speakers in a relaxed atmosphere. We discuss issues pertaining to the Church and its core beliefs that sometimes are in conflict with societal norms. Sponsored entirely by external donations and led by young adults for young adults, the program is sponsored in cooperation with Young Adult Ministry of Archdiocese of Indianapolis and is free-of-charge.

The mission of the organization is to provide young adults in the Indianapolis area an informal setting to meet and socialize with others while strengthening our faith. If you would like to meet fellow young adult Catholics in the area, please come join the fun and fellowship by checking out our calendar for upcoming ToT talks and events on our webpage at http://www.indytheologyontap.com/. Dates and locations for 2009 will be announced soon. You can also join our e-mail list by sending a request to theologyontapindy@yahoo.com. Get more information from the Office of Catholic Education, Young Adult Ministry at (317)236-1436.

Indiana Theology on Tap Leadership Team

Leadership Cohort Group 8: Future Leaders in Catholic Education

Identifying, forming and recognizing talented educators is important to ensure the future of Catholic schools. In order to encourage and support future leaders, a Leadership Development Program was established by the Office of Catholic Education. Prospective school leaders are those who have demonstrated a sincere interest and potential as future principals in our schools. Candidates are recommended to the Leadership Development Program by their principals. The group meets throughout the school year to discuss and investigate relevant topics in Catholic Education. Recently, Leadership Cohort Group 8 began their work in learning about Catholic school administration. The “8” indicates that this is the eighth group or cohort of people who have gone through the program in about the past ten years. Group 8 is made up of teachers and assistant principals from throughout the archdiocese. Group members participate in personal strengths assessments, effective communication exercises, school budgeting, governance and curriculum seminars as well as studies of current trends in student assessment and achievement. This year’s cohort is a very diverse group of educators. From Indianapolis, Carissa Maddox, elementary teacher at St. Barnabas; Eric Schommer, special education teacher at St. Monica; Mike Odar, social studies teacher at St. Anthony; Jackie Pirnat, teacher at St. Simon; Rick Rush, teacher at St. Roch: Tammi Misinski, teacher and assistant principal, Rhonda Swartz, from Immaculate Heart of Mary; and, Liz Ramos, language arts teacher at Cardinal Ritter High School. From St. Louis, Batesville, teacher, Sherry Kirchner; from St. Malachy in Brownsburg, assistant principal, Amanda Ettenburger and teacher, Becky Floyd; from St. Gabriel in Connersville, teacher Angie Fuller; and, from St. Mary, North Vernon, Lisa Vogel, teacher. Joe Brake is a part-time DRE at St. John, Bloomington and full-time public school teacher. Each participant has demonstrated not only an interest in becoming a Catholic school leader, but a potential to be a future leader. Congratulations to these dedicated educators. We wish them a wonderful future in our schools!

The President-Principal Model of High School Administration

The president-principal model of high school administration was first introduced in archdiocesan interparochial high schools in the mid 1990s as a result of recommendations from an institutional assessment by Catholic School Management, Inc. and subsequent consultations in the schools. Five of the seven interparochial high schools now have presidents and principals, as do all four of the private Catholic high schools in the archdiocese.

The model recognizes that there are two separate and distinct jobs for top administrators in Catholic high schools today. In simple terms, one involves the future of the school and the other involves the day-to-day operations. Principals are necessarily consumed by the daily responsibilities of running the school and responsibilities for advancing the institution can be neglected to the detriment of the long-term health of the school. Likewise, advancement goals can be met while the educational side suffers.

In business terms the president is seen as the “external officer” and chief executive (CEO) and the principal is the “internal” or operating officer (COO). In general, the president is about “friends and funds” and principal is about “faith, academics and students.”

The president is the executive officer of the board, oversees the overall mission and Catholic identity, leads strategic long-term planning, leads institutional advancement (development) efforts and the business affairs of the school. The principal leads faith community affairs, academic affairs and student affairs. While the roles are discrete, the model works best when the president and principal collaborate closely and have a united vision of what the school should be. Of course, they must both share responsibility for the over-arching mission in advancing the Faith.

The president-principal model first appeared in Jesuit high schools. Recent reports indicate that over 50 percent of Catholic secondary schools now employ the president-principal or head of school model of administration and another 14 percent anticipate changing to the model in the next few years. The model may not be feasible in the smallest Catholic high schools, but the board and administration must make effective provision for both the internal functions and external or “presidential” functions if a school is to be successful and viable today.

We believe that the model has helped our Catholic high schools become the successful educational institutions they are today and there is no question that the model, along with strong leadership in the positions, has made institutional advancement efforts more successful in the schools.
“Catholic Schools Celebrate Service” is the theme for this year’s Catholic Schools Week celebration, January 25-31, 2009. In providing for a Catholic culture of service in our schools, it is our hope and aim that our students will become good citizens, productive employees and exemplary leaders of our Church and society.

This is an exciting time for us in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as we are in the midst of celebrating our 175th anniversary! We have so much to be thankful for over the years and certainly one of our greatest blessings has been our Catholic schools. Perhaps the best way to appreciate the power of these schools is to imagine the Church in central and southern Indiana without them. What would our archdiocese look like without Catholic schools? Would it be as robust and vital? How would it produce generous leaders? How would it serve immigrants? How would it provide educational opportunities for the poor, especially in our cities? Our schools have developed a proud heritage of service for our local Church and the communities it serves. Clearly our Catholic schools have made a tremendous difference over the past 175 years.

May God’s rich blessings be with our Catholic schools, teachers and students as once again they make their mark when called to “Celebrate Service” in 2009. Let us together feel a sense of pride for the accomplishments of our schools for these past 175 years and anticipate their contributions for decades to come.

God bless,

Mickey

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