CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:
COMMUNITIES OF FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND SERVICE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2014

For the past 40 years, typically on the last Sunday of January, Catholic parishes and schools across the United States kick off a week of celebrating Catholic schools. The theme for this year’s National Catholic Schools Week is “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” The theme encompasses several concepts that are at the very core of Catholic education. Not only are schools communities themselves, they are part of the larger communities of home, church, city and nation. Faith, knowledge and service are integral components of a Catholic education and the measures by which any Catholic school can be judged. Celebrations and activities are planned across the diocese to honor those who contribute to the success of the schools – students, families, faculty and staff, volunteers, supporters and local leaders. A highlight of the week will take place on Wednesday January 29 when representatives from each school will celebrate Mass with Archbishop Tobin at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

ACRE: Assessing How We Teach the Faith

Each January, 5th- through 8th- and 11th- graders in our schools and parish catechetical programs complete a standardized assessment in religion. This resource of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) is referred to as ACRE — an acronym for “Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education.”

Since the late 1970’s NCEA has offered assessment instruments designed to strengthen religious education programs. IFG: ACRE edition is an integrated assessment tool that helps school, parish and diocesan leaders evaluate the faith knowledge and attitudes of students in Catholic schools and parish-based religious education programs. ACRE helps educators know where the strengths and growth areas are in their catechetical programs. All levels are aligned to the six tasks of catechesis outlined in the National Directory for Catechesis:

- knowledge of the Faith
- liturgical life
- moral formation
- prayer
- communal life
- missionary spirit

NCEA offers a similar assessment for adults called Information for Growth (IFG). It is important to assess any educational effort at any level — especially the core of the Office of Catholic Education programs: to proclaim and pass on our Catholic faith so as to deepen personal relationships with Jesus and strengthen participation in His holy, Catholic Church. In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, ACRE is an important way of measuring the success we have — all for God’s greater honor and glory!
Indianapolis was home to nearly 23,000 Catholic youth and their chaperones from November 21 – 23, 2013. Laughter, prayer, shared faith experiences and new friends were all part of the experience.

Here are a few key moments from the event …

The AYC’s Witness of Leadership at NCYC

The Archdiocesan Youth Council (AYC), comprised of high school students from throughout the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, played a pivotal role by …

- Assisting Jesse Manibusan (NCYC Emcee) at a concert held prior to the start of NCYC for participants from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana.
- Participating as ushers, lectors, and gift bearers at the Archdiocesan liturgy at St. John’s on Thursday afternoon which was followed by the Eucharistic procession to Indiana Convention Center.
- Leading a sung version of the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the conference prayer chapel.

#NCYC Trends #1—Check Out the Numbers!

Social media and teens – it is rare to find one without the other and NCYC was no exception. It was reported that both Twitter and Instagram saw a more than 1,000% increase in followers from before the conference to just prior to the closing liturgy.

- FACEBOOK: 13,300 likes to 15,940 likes
- TWITTER: 670 followers to 8,214 followers
- INSTAGRAM: 122 followers to 1,227 followers
- LIVE STREAMING: 12,000 visits from 30 countries

NCYC Scholarships

$113,000.00 was collected at the closing liturgy as part of the “Put $5 aside” campaign. These funds along with other corporate sponsorships will go towards future NCYC scholarships. In 2013 a total of $110,000 was awarded with one of our parishes, St. Maurice in Napoleon, IN (Batesville Deanery), receiving a $1,075 scholarship awarded with one of our parishes, St. Maurice scholarships. In 2013 a total of $110,000 was awarded with one of our parishes, St. Maurice in Napoleon, IN (Batesville Deanery), receiving a $1,075 scholarship.

In Celebration of the Closing of the Year of Faith

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R. and Bishop Christopher J. Coyne invited all high school youth and junior high (7th and 8th graders) of the diocese to the closing Liturgy of NCYC 2013 in celebration of the closing of the Year of Faith. This pilgrimage opportunity allowed those who were unable to attend the entire conference the opportunity to experience the larger, young church! Approximately 1,500 youth and chaperones (40 groups) from throughout the Archdiocese took advantage of this opportunity, joining the 12 bishops, 237 priests, 31 deacons, 90 seminarians, and 23,000 participants already in attendance.

Welcome Erin Jeffries!

Erin Jeffries has joined the Office of Catholic Education as Coordinator of Special Religious Education. Erin has a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Education and Master of Arts in Theology as well as extensive coursework in Early Childhood Education. She has a unique combination of catechetical training and experience with direct service to persons with disabilities. Erin’s joy and enthusiasm are clearly evident in her service to friends with special needs. Erin can be reached at (317) 236-1448 or ejeffries@archindy.org.

CATECHETICAL CERTIFICATION FOR ALL!

More folks than ever—at least in recent years—are involved with being better teachers, catechists and administrators through formation in our Catholic faith. Thanks to our guided reading and reflection process using the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (USCCA), hundreds of volunteers and staff are refreshing their knowledge of the Faith and reflecting on how we share faith in our schools and programs. This process leads to Basic Certification for new folks or first renewal of Certification for experienced teachers, catechists and administrators.

The most recent Annual Report of Parish Catechetical Programs shows nearly 600 parish religious education catechists engaged in the guided reading and reflection process. Similarly, several principals have already completed Basic Catechetical Certification with their entire staffs.

Unlike certification programs that require many hours sitting in a classroom, our United States Catholic Catechism for Adults process allows educators to immerse themselves in Sacred Tradition at times that best fit their schedules.

Likewise the amount of written work required for Basic Catechetical Certification and Renewal of Certification is streamlined and focused on how the doctrine reflected upon connects to the work of teaching the Faith at the applicable developmental level. A 5th-grade teacher or catechist, for example, reflects on a teaching of the Faith (often one that is being taught to students that very week) then shares in writing—as part of our certification process—how he or she can communicate that doctrine clearly and compellingly to 5th-graders, always utilizing where a 5th-grader tends to be developmentally. Thus our certification and renewal process is explicitly relevant to the daily work of sharing our Catholic faith.

Leading by example makes ongoing formation in faith a priority for all effective teachers, catechists and administrators. Our unique, convenient process for certification and renewal is making such formation a reality for a growing number of Catholic educators throughout the Archdiocese.

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Student-Created Notecards
Sold Nationally

Congratulations to St. Christopher Catholic School, its teachers and its students, for publishing their creative ideas on note cards sold by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Along with students from two other schools across the nation, students tell what they learned in each grade. Some favorite responses include, “Following the Ten Commandments is harder than you think” and “Don’t wobble a class pet’s cage.”

Archdiocesan Seniors Attend Liturgy With Archbishop Tobin

Just one year after Archbishop Joseph Tobin’s installation Mass as the Shepherd of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, he celebrated a beautiful liturgy with the archdiocesan high school Class of 2014. Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral was filled with enthusiastic, faith-filled young men and women, administrators and teachers from 10 of our 11 high schools on December 2, 2013 as Archbishop Tobin celebrated Senior Mass.

Archbishop Tobin explained to the congregation that this was the first “second” he had celebrated in the Archdiocese, given that the Senior Mass on December 10, 2012 was the first Mass he celebrated with his flock outside of his own installation on December 3, 2012. The psalm response for the day was, “Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord,” and the congregation certainly left this uplifting celebration of the Eucharist rejoicing in our Catholic faith and in our Lord and Savior!

Indiana State Tax Credit (SGO) Scholarships Are a Great Choice for Giving!

**EXAMPLE:** What is the tax impact of an individual or corporate contribution to the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust of $1,000 for Catholic school scholarships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONATION</th>
<th>STATE TAX CREDIT</th>
<th>FEDERAL DEDUCTION</th>
<th>FEDERAL SAVINGS</th>
<th>SAVINGS TOTAL</th>
<th>AFTER-TAX COST OF GIFT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE:** What is the potential impact of my $1,000 (net $350) donation on students?

* CHOICE SGO (tax credit) Scholarship of $500 can make a student eligible for a State Choice Scholarship (voucher) after one year.

**EXAMPLE:** Two (2) kindergarten students in a Catholic School can receive $500 minimum SGO Scholarships each for one year from your donation. After one year on the scholarship they may be eligible for a State School Voucher for $4,700 a year in elementary school and even more in high school. If they receive 12 more years of Catholic education on vouchers, they will have received a minimum of approximately $60,000 each over the life of their K-12 education.

Your gift of $1,000 (net $350) will have generated $120,000 in state voucher (tuition) money for two students.**

Please make your gift through Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust today at www.choicetrust.org or call them at: (317) 951-8781

*NOTE: These savings assume a 30% tax bracket and claiming the balance due after tax credit. Actual savings will depend on your actual tax bracket. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis does not offer this as tax advice. See your tax professional.

**Voucher reimbursement varies with tuition rates and public school district of residence.
This past year there have been several changes at the Office of Catholic Education (OCE). Gina Fleming accepted the role of Superintendent of Catholic Schools and Mary McCoy took on the role of Assistant Superintendent responsible for instructional support. Joe Peters, Chief Operating Officer for the OCE, shifted to part-time after many years of full-time dedicated service. Joe remains active in policy and accreditation, and Rob Rash, Assistant Superintendent in charge of personnel, has accepted some of Joe’s previous responsibilities. So, with all of these changes, why has there been such a focus on spending time in each of the Archdiocese’s 68 elementary and secondary schools? Well, we believe there is no better place to be! Below are a few questions recently asked of Gina Fleming while discussing the tour.

**What made you decide to do the tour?** With these changing roles at the OCE, the tour has served as a wonderful opportunity to get to know the schools and to build greater relationships with our dynamic school leaders and their phenomenal staff members. In our roles, we can easily get bogged down with the “adminis-trivia” of the job, and we do not want to ever lose sight of whom we serve or why we serve. Witnessing Christ’s presence in each school – seeing administrators, teachers, students and parents “in their element” – has been a great result of the tour. We want administrators, school personnel and students to know that we support their efforts and are some of their biggest cheerleaders!

**What did you learn about Catholic schools in the archdiocese from the tour?** The visits affirmed what we already knew, which is that the administrators and staff are incredibly dedicated to the mission of the Church and the vision of our Catholic schools. The tour further solidified our understanding of the schools’ strengths and ways that the Office of Catholic Education can provide support. Finally, the unique characteristics of each and every school community were even more evident. We are blessed to have great support and leadership from pastors and our commissions, boards and communities.

**How will you use the information you learned to lead Catholic schools in the archdiocese?** The tours gave us a clear understanding of the areas where the OCE can provide greater support: professional development, spiritual development, retention/recruitment of quality administrators, and assistance with programming that relates to special education, Title services, vouchers and Scholarship Granting Organizations.

To learn more about the tour, please refer to the January 10, 2014 edition of The Criterion, which can be found at www.archindy.org/criterion.
THE IMPACT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS AND VOUCHERS

Indiana is the model for the national school choice movement. Beginning in 2011, the state began offering vouchers for income-eligible public school families to enroll their children in private and parochial schools. The state also created SGO Tax Credit Scholarships to help students enroll in kindergarten or first grade in Catholic and other private schools. After one year on a scholarship the student could become eligible for a state voucher. The local Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust is an “SGO” – a registered “Scholarships Granting Organization.” Scholarship donors receive a 50 percent credit against their state tax liability plus a federal tax deduction. The Legislature expanded the program in 2012 and the most significant change came for 2013-14 – allowing SGO Scholarships to apply to students already enrolled in Catholic schools.

Some 913 students received SGO scholarships of at least $500 each for a total of nearly $721,000 for 2012. SGO figures are not yet available for this tax year, but the total scholarships should be more than double. If these students remain financially eligible after one year on the scholarships, they will be eligible for a state school voucher for 2014-2015. Most will remain eligible and most are already in our Catholic school seats.

Some 1058 students attended Catholic schools on vouchers in 2011 with $4.4 million in tuition assistance; 2294 attended in 2012 for $9.7 million, and for 2013, 4749 students received $20.1 million for a total of $34.3 million over the past three years. SGO Scholarships given this year will result in the largest number of voucher participants so far for 2014-15!

The Office of Catholic Education and Office of Stewardship and Development have sponsored the annual Celebrating Catholic School Values dinner for the past 18 years. A record $1.1 million was celebrated at the 2012 event, and at the 2013 event held on October 8, a new record of $3 million was celebrated by individual schools, parishes and the archdiocese. John Gause served as event chair both years, and Mike McGinley served as development chair for 2013 and will be the event chair for 2014. The $3 million grew to $3.2 million by the end of 2013. We recognize these men for their leadership and vision in helping schools take full advantage of the changes in the law and telling compelling stories to donors who could step up and make a difference. We are extremely grateful to our many donors who made this possible!

To learn more about CCSV visit https://www.archindy.org/ccsv/
Reflections from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The Holy Father recently entrusted a very important theme to the Third Assembly of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops this coming October: “Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization.” The significance of this Synod cannot be overestimated. Our task in OCE will be to ensure that our educational efforts promote this pastoral priority. We should therefore, with the help of God’s grace, redouble our efforts to prayerfully and strategically ask ourselves how our programs engage families in catechetical and evangelistic outreaches, especially those that assist parents in the fulfillment of their obligations as the primary religious educators.

The Church provides us with some very practical wisdom to employ in our efforts to do so. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, for example, provides us with a rather comprehensive catechetical blueprint in this regard when it reminds us that in the family “the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity. Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and a school for human enrichment. Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life” (1657).

Proclaiming our Catholic faith’s life-giving message of the sacredness of the family is not an easy task, but it is one that the Church is clearly expecting us to embrace in new and captivating ways.

There was once a brother and sister who wanted to visit the place where heaven and earth meet. They could see it in the distance and they knew it was called “the horizon” by grown-ups. So one day they set off to reach it, but after many hours they became discouraged because they didn’t seem to be getting any closer. Then the little girl spotted a small farmhouse on the edge of the forest. As they approached, the owner came out and they explained their quest to her. She pointed to a house in the distance and said, “You must hurry to get there before night falls.” Running as fast as they could, they soon reached the road that led them safely to their own home.

Pax et Bonum,

Harry A. Plummer
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