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EDUCATIONAL CHOICE LEGISLATION FAVORS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Educational Choice legislation recently passed by the Indiana Legislature is very favorable for Catholic schools. The new Indiana Choice Scholarship Program (HB 1003) allows families when first selecting a public or private school for their child to create the eligibility to receive public funds if they meet the income requirements. The program is described as “…the most far-reaching school choice legislation in the nation” (CAPE Outlook, May 2011, No. 365).

The Choice program provides scholarships to students by allowing a portion of state funds allocated for that child in the public schools to follow him/her to a non-public school. Students must have been enrolled in a public school for two semesters before they can receive a scholarship, not counting kindergarten. However, the new law allows for “a neutral entry point” for any student who previously received a state Choice Scholarship voucher or a scholarship through a Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO).

Families with incomes below the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch guideline can qualify for up to 90 percent of the local state public school tuition support level. Families below 150 percent of this level can qualify for 50 percent support. However, the scholarships will generally be the lesser of private school tuition and fees or $4,500 for students in grades 2-8 and up to full tuition in grades 9-12, limited by the percentage of local public school support from the state. Tuition (and fees) is described as that portion of the actual cost-per-student (expenditures) of the Catholic school that is the responsibility of the parents.

There are requirements for participating schools which schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis already meet in general (i.e., ISTEP, accreditation, accountability, non-discrimination, teacher evaluation, etc.).

Ideally, the new law would have allowed scholarships for more students already enrolled in Catholic schools, but all school reform legislation had to be “revenue neutral.” However, the Office of Catholic Education believes that over time, many more entry level students will be qualified for the scholarships allowing for the reduction or redirection of significant amounts of financial aid currently provided by Catholic parishes and schools. It should also result in needed enrollment increases.

The Indiana Scholarship Tax Credit Program enacted in 2009 has been expanded as a part of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program by HB 1003. This expansion allows middle and lower income families to receive scholarships from certified Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) and the cap for funds raised was expanded from $5 to $10 million (or, up to $5 million in tax credits) statewide. Corporate and individual donors will receive a 50 percent state tax credit for their donations to an SGO. The archdiocese has been working with the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust since 1990 and hundreds of students in Indianapolis Catholic schools have received millions of dollars in financial aid from this SGO.

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WE ARE “CALLED TO GLORY”
National Catholic Youth Conference ~ November 17-19, 2011 ~ Indianapolis

Having completed my third tour of the Indianapolis Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium, I tried to envision 25,000 enthusiastic young people in the halls and seats of this massive stadium and realized how rapidly our event was approaching! It is not unusual to see youth in this venue attending high school football sectional games or other sporting events; however this event, hosted by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Youth Ministry and sponsored by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) is the 2011 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) for high school youth! As I write this article, we are at planning Day 197 with approximately six months until the event date, November 17-19, 2011. Excitement is brewing among the local community as well as across the nation as details are falling into place and registration for the event has opened. Youth groups from Oregon to New York are planning their pilgrimages to Indianapolis for this incredible conference.

All high school youth are encouraged to participate in this fun yet formative venture in our Faith! The weekend will offer awesome music from many Catholic artists such as Matt Maher and Danielle Rose; inspiring talks from nationally known keynote speakers including ValLimar Jansen, Mike Patin, Mark Hart and Christina Lujan; an interactive park where an abundance of opportunities will be available for youth to engage in service based on Catholic Social Teachings, explore vocations in light of where God is calling them, and visit with college representatives and the many other exhibitors in the park. Perhaps the most profound moment for the young people will be the opportunity to pray and celebrate the Sacraments with 25,000 of their peers embracing the very core of our Catholic Faith! The scripture-based theme for the weekend is “Called to Glory” based on Matthew 25:31-46 in which we are challenged by Christ to answer the call to serve the marginalized in our society as part of God’s plan for eternal salvation.

Please mark your calendars for this incredible witness by our young Church in addition to the witness of many bishops, priests, religious sisters and brothers and all the lay men and women who minister to the youth. The weekend promises to be a Holy Spirit-inspired one for all! To register to participate, apply to be a volunteer or for more information, please go to the Youth Ministry website at: www.archindy.org/youth!

Kay Scoville is Director of Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese

**THE FULLNESS OF TRUTH IN THE RCIA**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a thriving and exciting ministry in parishes of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. It allows people to inquire about the Catholic faith and then progress through stages toward full communion with the Catholic Church. This process, known informally as RCIA, includes three very important elements: liturgical, pastoral and catechetical. The parish and larger church communities play an important role in each of the elements.

In response to Archbishop Daniel Buechlein’s desire to offer the best for those exploring the Catholic faith in the RCIA, he has promulgated Fullness of Truth: Doctrinal Guidelines for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. These guidelines address primarily the catechetical elements of the RCIA and were developed through a joint effort of the Office of Catholic Education and the Archdiocesan Initiation Committee. Fullness of Truth... uses the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (USCCA) as a primary resource along with Sacred Scripture and the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, itself. The goal of Fullness of Truth: Doctrinal Guidelines for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is to lay out a reasonable, appropriately comprehensive overview of our Catholic faith that can be connected to the liturgical year and used for reflection, discussion and life application in the RCIA process. The heart of the guidelines is a set of objectives which contain basic content for catechesis in the RCIA. These objectives were drawn from doctrinal statements as laid out in the USCCA and contain both cognitive and affective objectives. Suggested readings from the USCCA are also included. Fullness of Truth... is available in Spanish as well.

Archbishop Buechlein is providing leadership both locally and nationally with the promulgation of these guidelines. With the implementation of Fullness of Truth... to be used alongside Sacred Scripture and the Rite, itself, RCIA leaders will have ready access to all essential elements for helping candidates and catechumens invite the Holy Spirit to further His work of conversion.

**PROJECT SAFE**

This school year two of our former Mother Theodore Academies in center city Indianapolis became public charter schools. St. Andrew and St. Rita Catholic Academy became Andrew Academy and St. Anthony Catholic School became Padua Academy on the parish sites. The immediate challenge for the parishes was to find new ways to continue providing religious instruction and faith formation to the families in these communities. At Andrew Academy the voluntary after school faith formation program is called Project SAFE. This program that began the year with just five catechists and 24 students has blossomed and grown to seven catechists with 56 students. Its mission is to gather a parish community, a school community and a neighborhood community through passionate catechesis and dynamic programming to become one body, one spirit in Christ. The part-time catechists faced the challenges of providing an engaging faith-filled program to children who had just spent a full day in school – no easy task. But, the catechists have achieved a positive learning environment with clear expectations and positive reinforcement. A defining moment in the program year came on April 20, when the students and staff presented a Passion Play for parents and parishioners. More than a play, it was a gathering of the whole community to prayerfully participate in the Lord’s death and resurrection.

Aaron Haag is Program Coordinator for Project SAFE at St. Andrew Parish

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**The Good Word**
Saint Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education

Father Gerry Kirkhoff, pastor of Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, was honored as the Distinguished Pastor” at the annual Saint Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education luncheon in February. Father Gerry was recognized for his dedication to Catholic education and his inspirational leadership. He also serves as vicar for advocacy for priests for the archdiocese.

Also, at the luncheon, Lisa Hannon, teacher at St. Malachy School, Brownsburg, was selected from among the five Guérin honorees to represent the archdiocese at the recent NCEA National Convention in New Orleans. Other honorees included: Mary Rose Collins, Lumen Christi, Indianapolis; Patty Mauer, St. Patrick, Terre Haute; Marsha Sander, Roncalli High School, Indianapolis; and Stephany Tucker, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville.

Excellence in Catechesis Award

As she transitions from parish administrator of Catholic education to a role more focused on the financial dimension of Catholic education and his inspirational leadership. He also serves as vicar for advocacy for priests for the archdiocese.

Also, at the luncheon, Lisa Hannon, teacher at St. Malachy School, Brownsburg, was selected from among the five Guérin honorees to represent the archdiocese at the recent NCEA National Convention in New Orleans. Other honorees included: Mary Rose Collins, Lumen Christi, Indianapolis; Patty Mauer, St. Patrick, Terre Haute; Marsha Sander, Roncalli High School, Indianapolis; and Stephany Tucker, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville.

Saint Catherine of Siena Award

Mary Jo Thomas Day, Director of Religious Education at St. Monica in Indianapolis, received the Indiana Conference of Catechetical Leaders’ Saint Catherine of Siena Award at the biennial conference held in Mooresville. The award is given to catechetical leaders who exhibit leadership in the field of parish ministry and creative programming, model lifelong faith formation, and serve as a mentor of colleagues in catechetical ministry. Congratulations Mary Jo!

Continued from page one

EDUCATIONAL CHOICE LEGISLATION...

The archdiocese plans to continue to work with the CHOICE Trust to raise funds, increase the number of scholarships, expand the program across the archdiocese, and include high school students for the first time.

Families who fall under 200 percent of Federal Free and Reduced Lunch guidelines (about $80,000 for a family of four) are eligible for these SGO scholarships. Eligible new students must be entering kindergarten in a non-public school or have been enrolled in a public school. Therefore, kindergarten SGO scholarships are the “neutral entry point” for future Indiana Choice scholarship vouchers.

A last minute amendment to the scholarship bill allows for a $1000 per child tax deduction for “unreimbursed expenses,” including tuition for parents of private or home-schooled students.

SPECIAL ED HOUSE BILL 1341 PASSES

House Bill 1341 passed the Indiana House and Senate on large bipartisan votes. The new law requires that funds generated by special needs students enrolled in non-public schools be allocated by the public schools for the benefit of those non-public students in need of services. This is already required in federal law, but has not always been the practice in Indiana. This will assist Catholic schools in providing assistance to their growing special needs population and addresses a longstanding inequity.

ACT MOVES FORWARD

Originally formed as an ad hoc committee, ACT (Archdiocesan Compensation Taskforce), was populated with teachers and principals from throughout the archdiocese. The committee’s charge was to develop a teacher compensation model based on teacher performance. The first order of business was to determine the performance expectations to be included and methods by which these could be measured.

After much research, the expectations were grouped into six domains: School Mission and Catholic Identity, Planning and Assessment, Classroom Environment, Pedagogical Practices, Professional Responsibilities and Student Performance Data. Each domain contains several indicators. Depending on the domain, each can be measured by formal or informal classroom visitations, teacher goal-setting and dialogue with the evaluator; or, in the case of student performance data, with standardized test scores. There are rubrics (descriptors) designed to assess many of these indicators.

The ACT Committee, having completed the initial steps, then selected pilot schools in which these instruments could be tested. Schools applied for inclusion and provided evidence of teacher, principal and school community support for the changes embodied in this reform effort. The emphasis of this pilot effort is on learning and testing the evaluation system and its components. No changes in the current compensation practices have taken place. A finalized evaluation process and applied professional development for faculty and staff are necessary steps to be taken before any salary issues are addressed.

At this point, 15 archdiocesan schools are participating in the pilot phase of determining the basics of a teacher compensation model. Kathy Mears, Assistant Superintendent, indicates that a common thread running through participant comments is “We have better conversation about student learning and instructional effectiveness than we have ever had!” It is clear that this initiative is already benefitting the educational processes in our schools!
Ken Ogorek is Director of Catechesis for the Archdiocese

NEW WORDS, SAME BEAUTIFUL MASS!

What can change about our Catholic faith and what about it is eternal and unchanging? This question will be on the minds of many when they arrive at Mass on the First Sunday of Advent this year and hear slightly different words as Mass is celebrated.

God loves you so much that He reveals information about Himself—eternal, unchanging truth in the form of Catholic teaching, drawing on both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. But doctrinal and moral teaching (the Deposit of Faith) aren’t exactly the same as that area of Church life often called discipline and practice. In the realm of discipline and practice (tradition with a small “t”) the Holy Spirit often prompts Church leaders to make adjustments so that a Catholic life is more accessible and engaging for people of various times, places and cultures.

That’s exactly what’s happening with the revised translation of our Roman Missal—a phenomenon you’ve no doubt heard about and are anticipating. As Father Pat Beidelman made clear at recent PARE, YM and principal business meetings, because two popes over the course of several years decided that the English translation of Holy Mass could be done significantly better, we will hear some adjustments at each Eucharistic liturgy starting in Advent of this year.

Father Pat notes that this development is important for Catholic education leaders on two separate but related levels of experience. First, we must help prepare the faithful to use some new words at Mass when these changes kick in this November. In a sense this first need is relatively easy to do.

The second need runs deeper in the experience of Catholics and others throughout the months ahead. We must help God’s people grow in appreciation, understanding and enthusiasm for what Mass really is. Not just a nice ceremony with pretty vestments and catchy music. Not merely a chance to hear a good talk about how some Bible readings relate to everyday life.

Mass is an irreplaceable opportunity to be in the presence—the Real Presence—of Jesus Himself in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Mass is a serious obligation that like all the demands God makes of us helps make us whole, holy, healthy and happy. At Mass we experience time and space suspended—kneeling at the foot of the Cross—offering our lives and ourselves to our Creator who by His Holy Spirit helps us taste divinity and experience a foretaste of our ultimate destiny: eternal life in a place none other than Heaven.

Yes, changes are coming to the words we use to celebrate Mass each and every Sunday or Saturday (vigil) as well as all holy days of obligation. What the Mass is, though, doesn’t change because Who we encounter at Mass is the same yesterday, today and forever: none other than Jesus Christ!

Ken Ogorek is Director of Catechesis for the Archdiocese

A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Sexuality

On April 14, 2011 about 250 A Promise to Keep mentors gathered for their annual luncheon at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center.

Keynote speakers were Colts’ center Jeff Saturday (#63) and wife, Karen. Jeff and Karen affirmed the teens for the choices they had made regarding relationships. They focused on the importance of living a moral life dedicated to Christ, family and service of others. They strongly believe in the dignity of each person and the sanctity of marriage. “We are here because we are proud of you and we want to tell you how proud we are of the choices you have made and what you stand for.”

Jeff Saturday said a coach at Shamrock High School in Atlanta provided him a “defining moment.” Jeff was hanging out with the “wrong people” and the coach “got in his face” with, “bold words – but bold words spoken out of love.” Coming from a respected role model, these words helped to change his life.

“Today, Coach (Jim) Caldwell is a great role model for me. He encourages me to be the best husband and father I can be. He challenges me to be the man God created me to be.”

Karen says Jeff is a role model for her. He prepares a Scripture passage each morning for their children and together they talk about it before school. She admits their life can be challenging, but she knows her husband’s love is strong and true. She says it is their love, faith and family that sustains them.

Jeff reminded the students that God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). He challenged them to speak out boldly among friends. Look out for one another. If you are struggling with faith be prayerful, read the Bible, and ask God for help!
SPRED EVENTS CELEBRATE FRIENDS AND FAITH

On Saturday, March 19, 2011 our 11th Annual SPRED Dinner Dance was a successful evening of fun and fund-raising to support the Special Religious Development ministry. Over 200 attendees enjoyed a Mexican fiesta-themed dinner and dance at the Marten House. Funds raised at this event help support various SPRED-related efforts throughout southern and central Indiana.

More recently the 13th Annual SPRED Mass was hosted this year by St. Pius X Parish on Sunday, May 1, 2011. Our new auxiliary bishop, the Most Rev. Christopher Coyne, served as main celebrant and homilist, inspiring and even entertaining the faithful present with his energy, reverence and great stories. Both the SPRED Mass and our SPRED Dinner Dance happen mainly due to a corps of very dedicated volunteers.

The Office of Catholic Education continues to seek ways of raising awareness about disabilities, including persons with disabilities in typical catechetical sessions, and continuing to support SPRED ministry efforts as we have done for over ten years. Please keep this important aspect of our Catholic education ministry in your prayers as together we faithfully serve our friends with special needs.

JESUS SAID, “TAKE AWAY THE STONE”

On April 8, 2011, more than 175 high school students, chaperones, and volunteers arrived at Cardinal Ritter High School in Indianapolis for the Archdiocesan CONSUMED Retreat sponsored by Youth Ministry in the Office of Catholic Education. Participants gathered for a three day retreat centered on the Most Blessed Sacrament and focused on the Scripture passage about the raising of Lazarus. In addition to time spent in Adoration, the youth heard talks on the sacraments, prayer, and vocations, and participated in many different forms of prayer and praise.

The theme of the weekend was based around John 11:39, “Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’” Participants were challenged to take away “the stone” in their own lives that prevented them from truly embracing Christ and His plans for them.

Aside from the powerful experience of being in the presence of Christ for three days, one of the most inspiring aspects of the retreat was the opportunity for the youth to take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Priests heard confessions for nearly three hours as almost everyone in attendance received this sacrament of mercy and forgiveness. “Take away the stone” — words that the youth took to heart — words that all can live by.

96% of Providence Cristo Rey Seniors are College Bound Students Garner Nearly $1,300,000 in Scholarships

The Providence Cristo Rey Class of 2011 is preparing for graduation with high hopes. 96 percent of our seniors have been accepted into college and collectively they have been offered nearly $1.3 million in merit scholarships. Seniors plan to study criminology, business, nursing, political science, health sciences, screenwriting, accounting, environmental science, and construction management, among others.

These seniors are well prepared after four years of Providence Cristo Rey High School’s college prep/work study program. The students work one day a week at prominent Indianapolis companies gaining valuable experience and paying for 60 percent of their tuition. This makes a private, college-prep education affordable to families facing economic challenges.

Some of the seniors have had incredible work experiences. One has been assistant to the president of August Mack Environmental. Another, who wants to be a forensic scientist, has worked at AIT Laboratories, one of the fastest growing forensics labs in the country. Another has worked at Eli Lilly and Co. for four years, and for three of those years, she has worked alongside a chemist, assisting with research on an anti-cancer drug. She is co-authoring an article with the chemist that may be published in a major scientific journal. Several others have full-time summer jobs at their work-study companies.

Many of these students have overcome great academic and personal obstacles to put on their caps and gowns. But these challenges haven’t stopped our seniors. Not only have they been successful on the job; they have also performed in the classroom. One has a “full ride” to Georgetown University. Several others have substantial scholarship offers elsewhere. Over half have carried more than a 3.5 average their senior year — and teachers are tough graders at PCRHS! In addition, through dual credit classes, some have nearly a semester of college coursework under their belts.

The class of 2011 is the first full graduating class since Providence Cristo Rey opened its doors in 2007. A small class that entered as sophomores that year graduated last spring. Providence Cristo Rey High School is a private, Catholic, college-preparatory, work-study school on the near west side of Indianapolis designed exclusively for families facing economic challenges. It is part of the Cristo Rey Network of schools.

Sr. Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP, is Principal of Providence Cristo Rey High School

Congratulations to the Class of 2011! We salute the 1286 graduates from eleven Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Bishop Chatard 122 Providence Cristo Rey 25
Brebeuf Jesuit 194 Roncalli 264
Cardinal Ritter 103 Seccina Memorial 76
Cathedral 289 Seton Catholic 16
Oldenburg Academy 55 Shawe Memorial 27
Our Lady of Providence 115
HEAVEN: AN EASTERTIDE REFLECTION

About seven years ago Starbucks introduced their “The Way I See It” campaign, printing edgy talking points on their coffee cups with the intention of stimulating coffee-house type discussions. One of these cups featured the following observation from Joel Stein, a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*: “Heaven is totally overrated. It seems boring. Clouds, listening to people play the harp. It should be somewhere you can’t wait to go, like a luxury hotel. Maybe blue skies and soft music were enough to keep people in line in the 17th century, but heaven has to step it up a bit. They're basically getting by because they only have to be better than Hell.”

Not surprisingly, a hue and cry went up immediately among some members of the Christian community. As for me, I distinctly remember wondering whether the abundance of secular stereotypes about heaven is somehow related, at least in part, to our own lack of clarity and enthusiasm in proclaiming Church teaching on this topic.

If an earnest and prayerful review of our classroom or program-wide catechetical materials this Eastertide causes us to think we may be a little wanting in this regard, be of good cheer: many sound resources are available and OCE is more than happy to assist you in locating them. Of course, the foundational resource is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which not only explains the Church’s teaching on Heaven and its fundamental relationship to other teachings, but does so in an engaging and joyful manner. And, if we proclaim – and live – the Good News of this precious teaching with all the clarity and enthusiasm that is its due, perhaps there will be less interest in the printing of secular stereotypes of Heaven on coffee cups or in other venues of pop culture. Much more importantly, we may prove ourselves to be more effective agents in bringing others into its eternal citizenship.

Happy Eastertide,

Harry A. Plummer
Executive Director

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