



FROM THE BISHOP:
Catholic schools the responsibility of all Catholics

By Bishop Paul Sirba, *The Northern Cross*

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Fifth graders ask the best questions ... (On a recent visit to one of our Catholic schools), Max asked me, "What is heaven like?"

I quoted St. Paul in saying, "eye has not seen, ear has not heard ... what God has ready for those who love Him" (I Corinthians 2-9). Whatever is the most beautiful thing we have ever seen or heard or the greatest experience we have ever had pales in comparison to what heaven will be like. The next question had to do with what I was wearing around my neck.

Where else but in our Catholic schools could you entertain such a question and answer session? Where else could the bishop, the pastor, the principal and the teachers infuse faith into every part of the school day—religion class, math class, social studies, discipline, extracurricular ... everything?

Catholic schools continue to be the most effective means available to the Church for the education of children and young people who are the future of the Church. God has designed that parents are the first educators of their children in the ways of the faith. They witness to the faith every day by what they say and do. The role of the Church is to assist dads and moms in their duty as Christian parents to hand on the faith by providing opportunities for Catholic education in our schools, religious education programs, at home or through whatever creative ways we can discern.

The Diocese of Duluth supports 12 Catholic schools: St. Francis of the Lakes in Brainerd, Queen of Peace in Cloquet, St. Joseph's in Grand Rapids, Assumption in Hibbing, St. Thomas Aquinas in International Falls, St. Mary's in Pine City, Marquette in Virginia, and in the Duluth Area Catholic School System, Holy Rosary, St. James, St. John's, St. Michael's Lakeside and St. Rose in Proctor.

In order to grow and thrive, our Catholic schools need your help.

First, pray for Catholic education and the mission of passing on the faith in our families, in our parishes, through our religious education programs and, especially, through our schools.

Second, enroll your child in one of our Catholic schools if possible. Combining the Catholic faith with knowledge day in and day out not only roots the child in our tradition but also helps that child to mature into a good human being, a productive member of society and, most importantly, a faithful disciple of the Lord, willing to carry on His mission into the next generation.

Third, volunteer your time, if possible, at your area Catholic school. As a family member, a relative, a friend, you can support the vital work of our Catholic schools by helping out with tasks, small and large, which need doing in order to assist our dedicated staffs in their vocation of teaching our children.

Fourth, offer what you can to support our Catholic schools financially, whether you have children in our schools or not. These days, with rising costs, fundraising has become more and more necessary, and tuition assistance is sorely needed to augment already stretched resources. The cost for supporting our schools can no longer be placed exclusively on the individual parishes that have schools and on parents who pay tuition.

We are all responsible for our Catholic schools and their well-being. Whether the schools are near your parish, in the neighborhood or in the area, all of us can work together to provide the conditions that allow our schools to not only grow but also thrive under the providential guidance of God.

Thank you for your generous support of our Catholic schools, and may God bless you. †