



PASTOR NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2019

Dear Pastors,

In these cold gray days of a New York winter, one needn't look any further than our Catholic schools for a warm bright light, as our school leaders and wonderful students provide so much about which to be proud. Not only are our schools fulfilling our promises, in so many ways we are surpassing them, and that is very much thanks to your support, guidance, and wisdom.

The principals, staff, and faculty are working, tirelessly as always, to instill a desire to learn and a determination to succeed. These core values, paired with the spiritual growth that comes from a deeper understanding of a relationship with God, have produced yet another period of academic excellence and spiritual growth.

Recently I've visited dozens of our cherished schools, and after 43 years, I am still fascinated and inspired by our students and classrooms. The young people in our hallways are kind, generous, and polite. Some of them are downright funny as well!

This newsletter once again features input from your brother priests on their role in sustaining and enhancing Catholic education. You will also see an extensive section illustrating service projects performed by children across the archdiocese. Our students are just as engaged in doing God's work as they are their homework, and that tells me Catholic schools are well on our way to providing the world with its next great generation of leaders.

As always, thank you for your pastoral service to all of our sisters and brothers in Christ, most especially for your consistent spiritual counsel that informs all we do as Catholic schools.

Merry Christmas,

Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York



SOMETHING GREATER THAN OURSELVES: THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL WESTCHESTER REGION BROUGHT BOXES OF JOY TO THOSE IN NEED

When Maureen Harten, a proactive principal from Immaculate Conception School in Tuckahoe, heard about Cross Catholic Outreach's Boxes of Joy program, she knew she wanted to get involved. Principal Harten was able to rally other schools in the Central Westchester region and launched an initiative that would unite the faculties, students, and principals, reminding them that they are part of a larger school community. The schools were able to collect 588 boxes, and each box was filled with a specific list of items including food, toiletries, toys, etc. It was a joint effort that demonstrated the amazing feats we can accomplish when we work together. The participating schools consisted of: Immaculate Conception in Tuckahoe, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scarsdale, Our Lady of Victory in Mount Vernon, St. Peter's School in Yonkers, St. Paul the Apostle in Yonkers, Corpus Christi-Holy Rosary School in Port Chester, Sacred Heart in Hartsdale, and Our Lady of Sorrows in White Plains.



SERVANT LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT THE REGIONS

STEPINAC HIGH SCHOOL

White Plains, New York



More than 150 students participated in a “Cardboard Box City Campaign,” sponsored by Stepinac’s Campus Ministry. Student slept in cardboard boxes throughout Stepinac’s gymnasium and hallways to raise awareness for the growing homeless crisis and raised \$17,000 to help homeless in Westchester County and New York City.

ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL

Staten Island, New York



On Nov. 4, students and staff from St. Adalbert’s hosted their annual pre-Veterans Day breakfast and assembly. More than 100 veterans and their families attended the event and attendees consisted of both active and non-active military personnel.

OUR LADY OF GRACE SCHOOL

Bronx, New York



Students spent one of many charitable mornings helping their friends at the St. Frances of Rome Food Pantry prepare for Thanksgiving.

KINGSTON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Kingston, New York



The KCS National Junior Honor Society leaders presented the Executive Director of the People’s Place Cafe, Christine Hein, with a donation check for \$200, which they earned by selling snacks to their schoolmates. The cafe provides meals to all, regardless of their ability to pay.

SAINT PAUL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Valley Cottage, New York



Families and students from St. Paul Catholic School sorted and packed up Thanksgiving related food items that were collected in their classrooms to be donated to the St. Paul Church Food Cupboard for its Thanksgiving distribution. The food will go to needy families in Rockland County.

ST. JOHN SCHOOL

Goshen, New York



The sixth grade class at St. John’s organized a food drive with the Catholic Daughters to provide the less fortunate with important provisions.

ST. ELIZABETH SCHOOL

New York, NY



Over 200 St. Elizabeth School students wore pink to support the fight against breast cancer!

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON SCHOOL

Shrub Oak, New York



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School students collected 420 cans of food for their annual food drive.

SPIRITUALITY DAY 2019

On Nov. 6, 2019, over 3,500 of our elementary school teachers, principals, and administrators throughout the Archdiocese of New York gathered at the Westchester County Center for our annual Spirituality Day. We began the day with the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit celebrated by His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Michael Dolan, to pray for our students and colleagues in this great mission. Mass was concelebrated by several of our pastors and seminarians, including Auxiliary Bishop Edmond Whalen. The event concluded with a keynote address on the importance of Catholic educators delivered by Bishop Whalen.



THOUGHTS FROM SOME OF OUR PASTORS



Msgr. Kevin J. Nelan

Pastor, Immaculate Conception, Manhattan

Keeping our Parish school vibrant and relevant means working with the parishioners to help support the school financially. We have two programs to do this: a monthly collection for Catholic education and a Helping Hands program in which parishioners, and others, contribute to help pay the tuition of students who do not receive help from the Archdiocese of New York. Principal Mary Barry and I meet at least twice a week regarding our Catholic identity to be certain religion plays a central role in the daily lives of our students. This is accomplished through classroom instruction, prayers at all assemblies, planning the monthly liturgy with the homeroom teachers, and the scheduling of penance services and Masses. I also teach the upper grades once per week to augment the classroom instruction. I believe that the active participation of the Pastor and other priests, when available, is essential for a Catholic school to survive in our ever increasing secular society. For me, our school is a central tool in evangelization. Catholics and non-believers need to have the Gospel proclaimed and taught. Catholic education is a great way to bring the Good News to God's people and those who do not know Christ.



Msgr. Joseph R. Giandurco, J.C.D., S.T.L.

**Pastor, St. Patrick's Church, Yorktown Heights
New York Dean Northern Westchester and Putnam**

One of the greatest gifts that my parents provided to my siblings and me was a Catholic education. From Kindergarten to graduate studies in Rome and the Vatican, my Catholic education has helped to form my life with the values of the faith. I think it is safe to say, if ever there were a time when Catholic education was sorely needed, now is the time.

I know that Saint Patrick's School in Yorktown Heights is a fine example of a wonderful faith-filled academic environment. It is truly a family atmosphere and a joyful place. I know it is often a sacrifice for families to provide a Catholic education, but it is a sacrifice which brings rewards that are nearly impossible to measure in the usual way. The benefits last a lifetime. I thank God for our Catholic schools all throughout the Archdiocese of New York.

HIS EMINENCE VISITS ST. LUKE'S SCHOOL

Timothy Cardinal Dolan visited the children of St. Luke's School in the Bronx this past October for the Feast of the Guardian Angels. His Eminence celebrated Mass with the students and later remarked upon the quality of the St. Luke's Choir, whose songs uplifted the ceremony, as well as the St. Luke's student council, who had been so hospitable in showing him around their school. To the students' satisfaction, the Cardinal ended his visit by declaring a "No Homework Day."



CATHOLIC IDENTITY THE SERVANT LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE'S PRAYER BUDDY PROGRAM

The Superintendent's office has established a Servant Leadership committee which is entrusted with the task of keeping the concept of servant leadership at the forefront. The committee, knowing the priority placed on prayer and its significance in our lives, has put together a Prayer Buddy program. The program pairs up a person from the Superintendent of Schools (SOS) office with one of our schools. Once paired with a school, the person is asked to pray for that school community during this school year. We have divided up all of our schools into a three-year cycle, and we have chosen 41 schools at random to start off the program. Our hope is to keep the SOS office connected with our school communities through prayer.

“
And pray in the
Spirit on all
occasions with all
kinds of prayers and
requests. With this in
mind, be alert and
always keep on
praying for all the
Lord's people.

-Ephesians 6:18

CHOIRS FROM ACROSS THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK OPEN FOR RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR IN “THE SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS”



ST. GREGORY BARBARIGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Garnerville, New York

Accompanied by choir director David Azarow and principal Mrs. Dana Spicer, the choir from St. Gregory Barbarigo School, made the nearly 50-mile trek from Rockland County to Radio City Music Hall to sing at the Christmas Spectacular's opening performance on Nov. 9 at 10 a.m. The students are no strangers to performing on one of New York City's most famous stages, as this is the choir's second year opening for the Rockettes.



ST. PETER'S SCHOOL Yonkers, New York

Led by their choir directors—Mrs. Ana Germosen, Mrs. Yrcania Ramirez, and Ms. Jennifer Feliz—and with the support of their principal, Ms. Sheila Alagia, the elementary school students of St. Peter's School made their Radio City debut on Nov. 26, prior to the 10 a.m. showing. The students prayed a spontaneous litany, “St. Peter...Pray for us,” and marched onto the stage for an experience they surely will not forget.



MOORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL Staten Island, New York

The third group of our talented students to perform at Radio City Music Hall prior to the Christmas Spectacular was Moore Catholic High School on Dec. 19 at the 8 p.m. showing. The award-winning Performing Arts Chorus gave a five-minute a capella performance on the legendary stage. Preceding the show, President/Principal Mrs. Gina L. DeSantis said, “Our outstanding chorus, led by the incomparable Mrs. Kristen Pinto, will have the experience of a lifetime as they perform on the storied stage of Radio City Music Hall. We are so very proud of our student-performers.”