



DIOCESE OF TRENTON

Department of Catholic Schools

February 1, 2023

Good Day and Happy Catholic School Week!

As a superintendent of a Catholic program, I often get asked what's so different about a Catholic school? There are some obvious responses that I could give about our Catholic faith, great kids, amazing programs, or being a choice school, etc. To be sure the opportunity to deliver the Catholic faith to the next generation, who will be living as Catholics in our world, is a heady responsibility, I will not lie. But I think the real joy in Catholic Education is what many generically call the "teachable moment" or perhaps more correctly as they should be called opportunities for Grace.

Let's be very frank, and understand that our Catholic schools have solid, verified, incredibly strong curriculum designed to give our students an advantage, as they grow, learn, and achieve in this world. However, the real gem in our program's design are these teachable moments. They may come from the news of the day, they may be what happened at some point throughout the school day (morning, drop off, the lunchroom, or recess) or even with a response that was made by a student during an otherwise structured class or lesson. These are the real opportunities to shape the faith and understanding of our Catholic school students. When a point is made by a student, a question asked, or impactful event (for a student or group of students) that might otherwise be overlooked as a random event/statement and overlooked in a secular program, the Catholic school uses these opportunities for moments of Grace.

In a Catholic school, our days are filled with these opportunities for Grace which could truly change a thought pattern, a negative outcome, or without getting dramatic, the life of a student in our schools. That is the joy in teaching in a Catholic school, and hopefully the added value that our parents receive when they choose to send their children to a Catholic school.



When I go out and visit our schools, whether during Catholic Schools' Week or not, I always request of the children that when they go home, they say "thank you."

Catholic schools are a choice, and although they are a tremendous value, come at a cost for families. It is a sacrifice, to be sure. The money spent on tuition could buy a great summer vacation, a new car, or address some other family need.

I want to take a moment to say "thank you" to all the parents and supporters of our program for giving all of us in Catholic education the opportunity to be surrounded with your incredible students, the love that comes from being in a Catholic school, and the opportunity to walk together with your students and experience these opportunities for Grace filled moments.

"Catholic schools definitely have it all" and I want to thank you for experiencing that with us.

Warmest regards, and grateful for YOU!

Vincent de Paul Schmidt, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
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