



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER
Superintendent of Schools



January 31, 2017

Dear Friends,

All of us in the Catholic Schools Office want wish each and every student, parent, faculty, and staff member a very happy Catholic Schools Week! This year's theme is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." In the spirit of this theme all of our New Hampshire Catholic schools will be celebrating Masses, praying rosaries and offering open houses, curriculum fairs, works of service, and many other activities. Through these prayers and events, schools will share the good news regarding the value of a Catholic education and the many contributions made by our schools to our Church, our communities and our great state of New Hampshire.

How can the value of a Catholic education for children ages 3-18 be described? The easiest way to answer this question is to explain how we see each child as a unique and precious gift from God. We understand the Church's teaching that parents are the primary educators of their children and our job is not to replace parents but work with them to provide academic instruction and character formation for their children. We desire to, as Saint Dom Bosco said, "show them the beauty of virtue" and believe in educating the whole person; the intellectual, the creative, the physical, the emotional, and the spiritual. These descriptions explain why a Catholic education is the very best gift a parent can give their child.

We can easily see the value of a Catholic education in the caring communities we work hard to create for the families we serve. The attractive nature of such communities is one of the reasons more than 200 students transfer from public school to our New Hampshire Catholic schools each year. For them it is not just about finding a school, it's about finding a home. These communities are committed to educating students with all learning abilities as we believe each child deserves a chance to fulfill their God-given potential in a safe and loving environment. Therefore, it remains our mission to make a Catholic education affordable to any family that desires it. In fact, over 40% of New Hampshire Catholic school families receive some form of financial assistance so that parents can make this gift a reality for their children.

More importantly the value of a Catholic education may be measured by how frequently our students share their faith with others. This year our students will dedicate over 50,000 hours of community service across the state, not because it's a graduation requirement, but because our students feel called to serve as Jesus did. Facilitating opportunities for Catholic school students to serve represents something more than the mere desire to do good works, it is testimony that we see in them the faith filled leaders of the future.

Finally, as the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and more importantly a parent of six students currently attending a Catholic School in New Hampshire, I am thankful my children are immersed in a culture where they are challenged to grow in their faith. They are part of a community that does not ask, "What university do you want to attend?" or "What career do you want to pursue?" Instead, it is a community that asks, "*What is God calling you to do?*" For me, that represents the true value of a Catholic education.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Thibault". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

David Thibault
Superintendent of Catholic Schools