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EducationSection



ROMAN CATHOLIC
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Dear Parishioners and Pastors,

Thank you. I am grateful to have the opportunity to say this to you. Your support of Catholic schools through your parish collections and through specific campaigns such as Partners in Faith allows us to continue spreading God's word to our young people every day of the school year. It is one of the ways that your church support plants a tree for our future. The tree analogy is a good one for all who contribute to schools, including our principals and teachers. We are all planting seeds, watering them, watching them carefully and believing that whether we see the results now or others see them long beyond our own life, we are doing something great for children and for God. Your part in this is absolutely essential.



Some may be asking why we have Catholic schools. We have them for two major reasons, for the children attending them, but equally important, for future leadership within and outside the church. People seem to understand that the children who attend our schools are quite successful. What is less clear to some people is what Catholic schools do for the church as a whole. National research tells us that the leadership positions in our parishes (staff and volunteers) are held by graduates of Catholic schools. Would it surprise you to know that the vast majority of pastors and pastoral administrators in the Diocese of Rochester today attended Catholic schools?

Many may be saying they really believe in Catholic schools, but they cost so much today how can they afford them? Catholic schools have always been costly. For the first 100 years the operating costs were born largely by women religious. The legacy and continued contributions of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Mercy and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, particularly in this diocese, cannot be overstated. The parishioners who sat in the churches you attend today provided the school (and church) buildings we use. These people were often immigrants, much less financially secure than Catholics today. It is from their tremendous sacrifices that we reap the benefit, just as your contributions and sacrifices allow us to maintain Catholic schools now and into the future.

Perhaps the major concern we all have for the future of schools is how an ordinary Catholic family is able to afford the portion of the cost they are asked to bear to send children to Catholic schools. I do not have an easy answer to this question. We have financial aid, but it is not enough. We have some major donors, but not enough. We are looking at ways to restructure tuition to allow more families to attend Catholic schools. We will continue to struggle with this challenge. I ask, over and above the contributions you are now making, for your prayers that we will meet the challenges of today with the courage and faith of those who have gone before us.

It is because of your support that we are able to provide help to all of the parents with children currently in our schools. I know that each of these parents join me in saying to each of you, thank you.

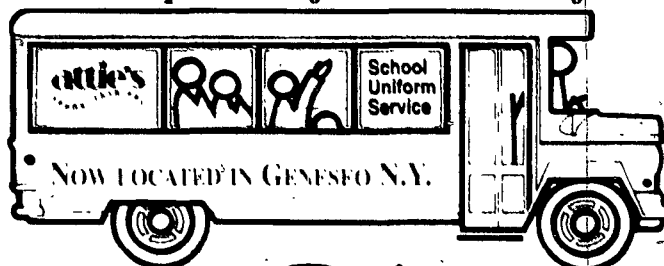
Gratefully,

Elizabeth Meegan, OP

Elizabeth A. Meegan, OP
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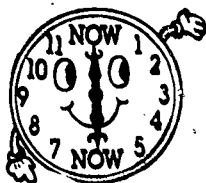
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