



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Catholic Schools Week 2023

Dear Pastors and Principals,

Happy Catholic Schools Week! It is a joy to celebrate this week with our Catholic schools. Your work in helping our children know, love, and serve Jesus is invaluable and we all must recognize how the Church's evangelizing mission is realized in our schools. The Wall Street Journal recently touted the higher test results over these past few years for Catholic School students as compared to public schools. Even during the pandemic, our students thrived. We certainly need to share a lot of good news with our people.

FAITH. The primary purpose of our Catholic schools is to teach students to know Jesus. Your commitment to forming Disciples of Christ by teaching the Catholic faith is commendable. Certainly the religious education curriculum is an integral part of each child's education; but your witness as role models of faith is most important in the religious and spiritual formation of our students. Additionally, the opportunities for participation in Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Holy Mass are essential for our children to deepen their relationship with Jesus.

EXCELLENCE. Our Catholic schools not only serve as a ministry of God's hope and love, but also nurture a culture of academic excellence. I am so proud to know that despite the challenges of the past few years, our students continue to perform above the national average in standardized testing. The fact that our schools remained open and fully functional throughout the past few years is a testament to the commitment and dedication of faculty and administration to provide a rich education for the whole child: spiritually, academically, emotionally, and physically. The availability and consistency of strong curricular and extra-curricular programs in Catholic schools contribute to the continued growth in student achievement. As educational leaders, your high expectations and continued professional growth enable our children to develop their God-given talents in the pursuit of truth. Indeed, there is no doubt about the profound impact that committed, quality leadership has on student achievement.

SERVICE. The mission to serve others is a distinguishing characteristic of our Catholic schools. I am so grateful to you for leading our children in the growth of virtue, loving God, and loving others. In my travels throughout the diocese, I see how the schools emphasize the saintly men and women of faith and their lives of holiness. How our children need to see and hear about these models of virtue so that they, too, may learn to live as saints! It is also very evident that

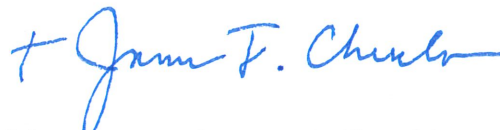
through myriad volunteer projects and collections our students are learning the basic tenets of Catholic social justice. Our Catholic schools truly enable the children to nurture the gifts that they are given so that they may serve others in the name of Jesus Christ.

As a product of Catholic schools, I can speak directly of their effectiveness in providing children with an excellent religious and academic education. I am very grateful to the clergy, educators, and staff who work as ministers of hope within the school communities as they lead our children to find God in their lives.

Catholic schools have been successfully educating children for over 200 years in the United States. As you continue this great work of evangelization within our Mother Church in the Diocese of Metuchen, please know of my deep gratitude, support, and prayers for you. Likewise, I am grateful for all our teachers, administrators, staff, volunteers and generous benefactors, along with our dedicated staff in the Office of Schools led by Barbara Stevens and assisted by Sr. Mary Louise Shulas, MPF and Laura Ferreras. Be assured of my prayerful support for all of you.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James F. Checchio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen