



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

January 2019

Dear friends in Christ,

We have good news to share and celebrate as we observe national Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 27-Feb. 2, 2019. The 31 Catholic schools in our diocese are serving more than 6,550 students this school year, including our largest preschool class in 18 years and our largest kindergarten class in six years. It is encouraging to see so many families choosing Catholic education for their children early in life, and it is beneficial for the growth and vitality of our Catholic schools. Last fall, we welcomed students into the hallways and classrooms of the new, independent Saint Robert Catholic School in Ada. We are also proud that our alliance of Catholic schools in the diocese has implemented new curriculum standards, which are firmly rooted in our faith and were developed through contributions from educators and theologians.

A Catholic's primary focus in life is to seek heaven and to live out their God-given mission on earth. Catholic schools offer young people the possibility of a daily encounter with Jesus Christ within the context of the highest-quality education. I thank parents who send their children to Catholic schools. To those of you who work and volunteer in our schools, thank you for sharing your talents and Catholic faith with our students. Without you the ministry of our Catholic schools would not be possible.

I invite every Catholic in the diocese to support our Catholic schools. If your family is considering Catholic school education, assistance is available in the form of scholarships offered through the diocese, parishes and schools to help you make this investment in your child's future. I encourage you to prayerfully consider our Catholic schools and find one near you by visiting CatholicSchools4U.org, or by calling our Office of Catholic Schools at (616) 246-0590.

We are committed to offering an excellent education to even more students through our "Catholic Schools: Bridging Faith and Future" strategic plan. This five-year plan is in its first year of implementation. It enhances Catholic culture and mission, programmatic excellence, affordability and accessibility, and stewardship and sustainability among our schools and it is already bearing fruit in all the ways mentioned above.

I am grateful for your support of our Catholic school ministry. Please continue to pray for the young people of our diocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids