



The Diocese of Knoxville
Office of the Superintendent of Schools

January 29, 2024

Happy Catholic Schools Week!

This is the traditional time when the Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools celebrate who we are, what we do, and why we do it. With our extended communities of faith and support, we celebrate our successes in the classrooms, in the labs, on the stage and athletic fields. Most importantly, we celebrate who we are as a Catholic faith community. When reflecting on our programs, we often try to quantify our successes: how well we scored on the test, what was the final score of the game, how do we compare to.....the list goes on and on.

The Diocese of Knoxville Catholic school students do very well with all those items. However, our true measure of success, and the one that ultimately and infinitely matters has to be how well grounded are our students in our Catholic faith and how well prepared they are to handle the spiritual battles that lay ahead in their lives. Our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Knoxville help each child create a firm foundation upon which they can construct their own lifelong faith journey. This work is not easy: it takes a spiritual village of support to help ensure success. Our Catholic school pastors, teachers, advisory councils and faith communities provide the tools and building materials to assist in creating disciples for Christ with our students. We are ALL responsible for helping to prepare our students to not only hear the word of God, but to answer Him daily as they live out their lives as responsible disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is with much gratitude and appreciation that we celebrate those students who heard and affirmably responded to God's word and said "Yes" to Him as a result of the work that occurred in our programs. We say, "Thank You" to the school Pastors who said "Yes" to taking on the task of not only ministering to a parish flock, but also attending to the needs of a school community. We say, "Thank You" to our compassionate and caring School Leaders, Teachers, Support Staff and Advisory Councils who said "Yes" to taking on the administrative, instructional, or support ministries that develop our students academically, vocationally, and spiritually. Finally, we say "Thank You" to the extended faith community in the Diocese of Knoxville for your spiritual and financial support of our efforts. As a faith community, we have the honor, privilege and responsibility of preparing souls for work on earth, as well as for an eternity in the Kingdom of God.

I look forward to visiting our 10 Catholic schools throughout the course of Catholic Schools Week. We have a lot to celebrate and be proud of in the Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools.

Peace—

Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S.
Superintendent