



## Catholic Education and Schools

### Challenges

There are challenges we face in educating our children in the teachings of our faith. *"When we as Catholics fail to proudly and faithfully raise the flag of Christ and His gospel or do so with an uncertain voice, then the peddlers of a different ilk will soon run their particular flag up the pole"* Father Paul Andrews, S.J.

This statement is true not only for us and our institutions of learning but also for our nation at large. Today we see signs of this all around us both in our nation and institutions of learning. We might well call this political correctness gone wild with narcissism, hedonism, and minimalism becoming the accepted measurement of right behavior.

The question we should personally answer is "What flag have we been flying over our home?" After all, the home is the first school of learning. Is

our home a house of prayer and devotion to our Lord and home to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Angels and the Saints? Do we set aside time for the study of the bible and the teachings of the Church or are our studies just focused on academics and secular subjects? Is our home Christ-centered? Do we regularly go to confession or Mass? Do our extracurricular activities like sports, music, dance, theater, etc. take precedence over our religious duties? Do we fit our religious responsibilities around our secular activities or vice versa? Answering these questions honestly will enable us to see "which flag is flying over our home."

Over the past 60 years, Catholic schools have undoubtedly changed. Foremost, where in the past nuns and priests were the main educators, today these roles now belong to the laity. As the teaching roles transitioned to the laity, the costs of salaries

and compensation increased affecting the cost of tuition. In the past, nuns and priests were paid a minimal salary and worked many hours of overtime. Catholic school tuition was very little and in some cases zero, and it was very affordable. This is no longer the case. Today, teacher compensation is market driven and adds to the bottom line of operating costs thus, increasing the cost of tuition. This raises challenges for our Catholic schools as they balance offering an affordable education for the Catholic children and hiring qualified educators who create an excellent learning environment.

On a side note, the Catholic school was committed that no child be left behind long before former President George Bush made it a public priority. Anyone who was taught by nuns and priests knows that they made sure that all students reached their full potential.

"Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects — because development is the results of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on."

- Pope Francis



\* More information to follow on this topic next week.