



DIocese of ARLINGTON

Office of the Bishop

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January 29, 2017

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

United with all dioceses across the country, we celebrate National Catholic Schools Week beginning on *Sunday, January 29th* and concluding on *Saturday, February 4th*. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the great gift of Catholic education here in the Diocese of Arlington. The theme this year from the National Catholic Education Association is once again: *Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service*. Our diocese is blessed with 37 elementary schools, four high schools, four stand-alone preschools, and four independent Catholic schools that educate over 17,600 children from Winchester to Arlington and from Fredericksburg to Alexandria. Catholic Schools Week is a perfect time to learn more about our Catholic schools and I encourage you to attend one of the many Open Houses throughout the Diocese.

We have much to celebrate here in our Diocese regarding Catholic Education. Our elementary schools are innovative, faith-filled, and exciting places to learn. Over sixty percent (60%) of our schools are U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools which honors schools with top academic programs. Our Catholic schools are guided by gifted pastors and principals and with the dedicated service of over 1,400 educators who provide a quality, Christ-filled education each and every day.

We are blessed, too, with vibrant, Catholic high schools that truly live the theme of communities of faith, knowledge and service. We graduate 100 percent of students from our high schools and 98 percent are accepted into colleges and universities. Last year, our students received \$83.2 million in scholarships and provided over 350,000 hours of service both at home and abroad. Our students truly embrace the Gospel message as reflected in their generous service on behalf of others and our communities and by the fact that over 130 vocations to Priesthood and Consecrated Life have come from graduates of our high schools.

I am grateful to all those in our Catholic schools who assist parents in the education and formation of their children and to the many people throughout our diocese who give of their financial resources and time to support our schools. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

May Our Lord Jesus continue to shower his blessings upon our Catholic schools so that they may remain *Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service*.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington