

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



A GOOD TIP - A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

A couple of years ago at Sacred Heart, I celebrated a school mass for our children in the church on Castleton Avenue. During the homily, I showed the kids some of the vessels that we used for the celebration of the liturgy. After I displayed the chalice, I held up the plate (paten) which the host rests upon and said, "Now children can anyone tell me what we use this for at Mass?" Well, little Teddy Marcinak who was then in Kindergarten raised his hand. "I know, Father," he sputtered out. "that's where you put all the tips that you get!" Well, we all had a good laugh over that one!

It is certainly true to say that a Catholic school adds a great deal to a parish. In thirty years of priesthood, I have always been assigned to a parish with a school. I wouldn't want it any other way! One good tip that I would like to pass on in the column this week is addressed to young parents: please consider a Catholic education for your child! A Catholic school does make a difference.

This past week (January 28th-February 3rd) we celebrated "Catholic Schools Week." It is a time each year when we recognize the importance of our Catholic schools, not only here at Saint Charles but all across the nation. The theme this year is "Learn, Serve, Lead, Succeed." So let's reflect upon it for a moment.

Certainly, children learn exceptionally well in our Catholic schools. Consistently, our students score higher on standardized English and Math tests than their counterparts in the public schools. 98 percent of Catholic high school students go to college. So the proof is in the pudding as they say!

Secondly, because of the religious curriculum and Christian values that are inculcated in our Catholic schools, children learn about their faith. They take seriously the gospel mandate of Jesus Christ to serve and to lead. In fact, our students come to appreciate an important point: that true leaders serve not themselves but others and that is a very valuable lesson to learn.

I see firsthand here at Saint Charles how our young people serve others whether that be reading and assisting at Mass, bringing over groceries to the food pantry, setting up for bingo nights or helping the pastor with his various signs and props! When I see how generous and good our Saint Charles students are, I feel a bit better about those who will become tomorrow's leaders in the Church and in our world.

Finally, "to succeed." Catholic school students will succeed because they have been given all the tools academically, spiritually, athletically and socially to do it! Our graduates are well prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead of them in high school and beyond. I am grateful to Mr. J.C. Kiernan, our very hard working principal here at Saint Charles and his very dedicated staff of teachers who day in and day out strive to give our boys and girls the best education that they could possibly have.

The word education is from a Latin word that means to "Lead out of; to draw out of." So it is that our Catholic schools draw out the best from our students not only in math, science, computers and language arts but above all, leading them to encounter Jesus Christ so as to bring his teachings and values to a world that sorely needs them!

Sincerely in Christ,

*Fr. Louis Jerome
Pastor*