



November 2009

## Bishop Edward U. Kmiec's Pastoral Letter on Catholic Schools

*"Visioning for the Future"*

My Dear Friends,

These are exciting times for our Catholic schools! There is a renewed sense of commitment and enthusiasm on the part of everyone who is engaged in what I consider a mission vital to the future of the Catholic Church: strong Catholic schools.

Generations of young people have been educated in our Catholic schools, dating back to the 1800s. That tradition of academic excellence continues to this day. Our students move on to become leaders in our communities, passing on the Catholic values they learned to their children. It is a beautiful continuum of our Church, as Catholic schools instill our core beliefs and commitment to Gospel values in our students.

We have a vision for thriving Catholic elementary schools in the eight counties of Western New York. This encompasses a number of areas, including Catholic identity, academic excellence, enrollment, leadership and financial viability.

Catholic values permeate the curriculum and educational programming with prayer, worship and liturgical experiences enhancing the faith life of our students, families, faculty and staff. Our Catholic schools must have an authentic Christ-centered mission which fosters personal pride in, and commitment to, the Catholic faith.

While we focus on our Catholic identity, our schools have a longstanding tradition of welcoming families from diverse backgrounds in terms of religion, race, ethnicity, economic status and ability. School enrollment reflects the diversity of the parishes and local community being served.



---

"We have a vision for thriving Catholic elementary schools in the eight counties of Western New York."

---

"Our Catholic schools must have an authentic Christ-centered mission which fosters personal pride in, and commitment to, the Catholic faith."

---

"It is essential that our schools have sufficient revenue to fund a quality program, invest in technology and provide a well-rounded education."

## Leadership

Along with the leadership of the Division of Catholic Education, I recognize and support our Catholic schools as a ministry vital to the future of the Church. It is essential that our pastors, principals and other administrators actively promote collaboration and growth of the staff. Parents need to be committed to their parish and school, sharing their gifts and talents to further the Church's mission.

## Academic Excellence

Families recognize that Catholic schools are equal to, or better than, other educational options. Catholic schools excel academically, meeting or exceeding national, state and diocesan curriculum standards. Each graduate leaves school prepared by our teachers to succeed at the high school level.

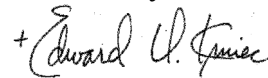
## Financial Viability

It is essential that our schools have sufficient revenue to fund a quality program, invest in technology and provide a well-rounded education. I am very grateful to all our parishes which make a substantial and long-term commitment to funding Catholic schools. Even parishes where there are no schools recognize the importance of sustaining our Catholic schools.

While much has changed in our nation, Catholic schools remain a constant, an invaluable tool for educating generations of children who will continue to be a source of leadership in our Church and in our communities.

Together, let us continue to work to ensure that our Catholic schools grow and prosper while remaining available, accessible and affordable.

Fraternally in Christ,



Most Rev. Edward U. Kmiec  
Bishop of Buffalo

