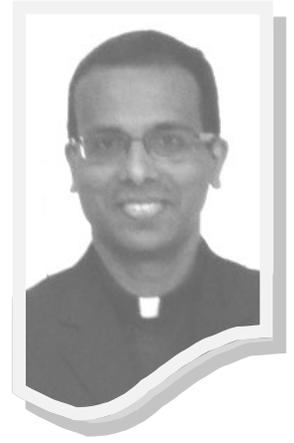




# From the Pastor



## Catholic Education: Part 3

Why is a Catholic education important? Our schools evangelize. Our schools celebrate the Word of God day in and day out. If a child goes to a Catholic school, from K–G8, and he/she goes to the weekly school Mass, he/she will have heard the Word of God at Mass over three hundred times. That does not include the classroom during Religion class, during Advent and Lent, and hundreds of other times. No one who goes to our schools could possibly graduate and not have a sense of the Word of God, the saving Word of God. Our schools have been, are, and will remain the best, the very best way to evangelize.

I do not think that society is all bad and that everything is wrong with society. But I can say this: 30 years ago, when I was a boy, had I not gone to Catholic school, I still might have been somewhat formed as a good and honest person by the culture around me. I don't think that this is true for children today. They are being shaped and formed by a culture that does not have God at its core, at its center. In fact, they are being shaped and formed by a culture that is anti-God. I think that this is a problem that all of us, especially immigrant families from Mexico and Latin America, are discovering. The village that you came from evangelized. The village itself, its way of life, shaped and formed children into good people. When you immigrate here, you often realize—too late—that the town or city that you are living in now is not evangelizing your children the way it did in your village in Mexico or Central or Latin America. Rather, this anti-God culture is shaping and forming your children. That is why Catholic schools are a great help to evangelize and form our children with God at the center of their lives.

Our schools teach children to pray. Teach a child to pray, and you will do him/her a favor for the rest of his/her life. When you learn to pray as a child, it goes into a groove in your brain that stays with you for life. It gets stuck in there. I have visited a lot of people who are ill and who are dying. Some of them are not able to respond or talk. But the moment you make the sign of the cross, you see their hands moving as well. Or when you say the “Our Father” or Hail Mary,” you see their lips moving. They make the sign of the cross every time I bless them.

Research has shown that Catholic school graduates vote more, are less racist, contribute more to the Church, and are more active in their communities. They give more to the collection. They read at Mass when they are adults. They participate in civic and community life.

Our schools are the only educational system that tracks the poor, so that they will not fall through the cracks. The poor are known by name. They are cherished. They are helped.

—Fr. Jose Thomas