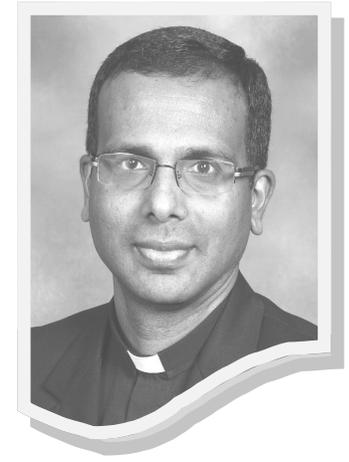




From the Pastor



Catholic Education: Part 1

As we approach the month of September, I am sure you are thinking of a school for your children. I hope you first think of giving your children a Catholic education. Catholic schools serve the Church and the country. Our country would be very different were it not for Catholic schools. So would our Church. According to the latest report from CARA, the Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate, 77% of all people in formation for priesthood or religious life today attended Catholic school at some point in their life. That’s a very high percentage. And if you think about it, what is even more amazing is that there are about 6,000 fewer Catholic schools today than there were 50 years ago. So 77% is especially high.

Another report released by CARA in 2016 is about Catholics and Mass attendance: 1960, 75% (Catholic school), 65% (public school); 2013, 27% (Catholic school), 2% (public school). One thing I find very exciting and hopeful is that more and more people in the Church are on the Catholic school page. My goal is to move our Catholic school to the front of the minds of our parishioners so that they see it as important as pro-life and immigration. More and more bishops are seeing the importance of Catholic schools, too. There are signs of hope everywhere!

The true cost of a Catholic education has remained elusive for most of the 200-year history of Catholic schools in the United States. The “strategic subsidy” provided by vowed women and men Religious meant that Catholic schools thrived for the better part of 150 years without charging tuition. In my own case, I went to a Catholic school in Grades 9th and 10th. My parents never paid a penny for tuition. They only paid for milk and for books. Unfortunately today, we do not have many men and women Religious who once taught for nothing. We are very fortunate here at St. Francis to have three nuns who will be teaching in our school this coming school year.

The actual cost to educate a child at St. Francis is \$10,000, but our tuition for Kindergarten to 8th Grade is only \$5,683 per child per year for a parish family. This is only about 56% of the actual cost to educate a child. This is very close to the national average for Catholic schools, which is 53%. Here is a comparative look at the average tuition cost for Kindergarten through 8th Grade in a few private schools in Bend:

Cascade Academy	Seven Peaks	Waldorf	Trinity Lutheran	Morning Star	Eastmont	St. Francis
\$15,700	\$12,508	\$10,025	\$7,800	\$5,750	5,750	\$5,683

We have kept the fees at St. Francis as affordable as possible. There are 19 private schools\preschools/high schools in Bend. Out of the eight private schools in Bend similar to ours, we are the seventh least expensive when it comes to tuition, but we are on the top of the list when it comes to quality education. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School provides students with a Christ-centered community—educating the whole child through academic excellence and instilling the virtues that will guide them to be service-minded leaders. I am aware that there are parish families who send their children to other private schools, spending way more for tuition. Every Catholic parent has a moral responsibility to give a Catholic education to their children. It *is* possible with some sacrifice! No school is perfect, but I know from hundreds of years of history that a Catholic education for sure is invaluable, and there is no substitute for it.

—Fr. Jose Thomas Mudakodiyil