



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 31, 2023
Memorial of Saint John Bosco

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each year, the Church throughout the United States takes the opportunity to celebrate the gift of Catholic Education during Catholic Schools Week which, this year, began on January 29, 2023 and concludes on February 4, 2023. As Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, I want to express how incredibly proud I am of our Catholic Schools in the ways that they evangelize our young Catholics here on Long Island.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis says, “Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture” (§134). This mission-driven vision of Catholic Education is especially fitting as the Church in the United States participates in a national Eucharistic Revival, because the mission of the national Eucharistic Revival is embedded into the mission of Catholic Education. Assisting students to know and love Jesus through the transformative power of the Mass, and equipping them to evangelize their families and communities, is an extraordinarily beautiful and achievable goal that our Catholic Schools strive to achieve each day.

As schools throughout the Diocese celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2023 with Masses, open houses, and other various activities, we give thanks to the Lord for those who make these events and Catholic Education as a whole possible. To the dedicated and faithful administrators, teachers, and staff members: thank you for working tirelessly every day to advance the Church’s evangelizing mission by your love for Christ and by helping his children to know the presence and power of his love in their lives. To the many parents and guardians who generously offer so much time to assist your pastors and principals in advancing the mission of Catholic Education in your parish and regional schools: your love for Christ and his Church is inspiring, and I am so grateful for your Good Samaritan charity, dedication, and perseverance. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to the Morning Star Initiative and the Department of Education staff who collaborate and work together in order to provide every student in our Catholic Schools with an education that is robustly Catholic, academically excellent, safe and supportive, and sustainable.

Today we celebrate the Memorial of St. John Bosco, who is one of the patron saints of school children. St. John Bosco understood the essential mission of Catholic Education in the world. He once said, “If we want to have a good society, we must concentrate all our forces on the Christian education of the young.” Because of the fantastic work being accomplished in our Catholic Schools, I think we can have great hope in the future of society here on Long Island: a future that is filled with young Catholics who are on fire for Jesus Christ and his Church!

Through the intercession of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the patron saint of Catholic Education, Saint John Bosco, and Mary, Star of Evangelization, may the Lord continue to bless the Morning Star Initiative, the Department of Education, our Catholic Schools, and all those involved in Catholic Education on Long Island, especially our students!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre