



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 26, 2020

Dear Parents,

As Bishop of the Diocese of Metuchen, one of my great joys is to be able to spend time with the young people of our Diocese in many different settings. Each weekend, as I visit your parishes, I have the opportunity to see many families and hear from the children on any number of topics! They are always filled with questions! My visits to our Catholic schools are always a great gift that brings me joy and hope for our world.

I hope that you and your family had an opportunity to participate in our Year of Awakening in preparation for our Consecration to Jesus through his Mother Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe. As you know, all of our students across the Diocese participated in a Consecration Prayer Service that enabled them to commit themselves to deepen their relationship with Mary and her Son. In my homily at the prayer service, I asked them to do just one specific thing each day that is an extension of their Year of Awakening, something as simple as a “Hail Mary” as a special intention for the needs of others. I invite you to do the same! If you would like to view the Prayer Service with the students, please visit our special website dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe: Lighting Hearts On Fire <https://lightingheartsonfire.org/>.

The Consecration to Our Lady of Guadalupe will continue to be a significant part of life in the schools of our Diocese. Our Catholic schools exist, primarily, to teach the Gospel message. These schools are intended to be places where the everyday lessons of academic life are consistently taught within the context of the message of God’s love for us and our expression of that love by our action in the world. The benefit of a Catholic school is that the message is for all of us—parents, teachers as well as students. When a student enrolls in a Catholic school, the entire family becomes a part of that school community. Certainly, there are many activities such as geography bees, book fairs, athletic activities and carnivals. But, more importantly, there are opportunities for you to share in liturgies, prayer services, Stations of the Cross, May Crownings. Catholic schools are meant to assist parents/guardians in the important role as the primary teachers of their children’s faith.

With that in mind, the Office of Schools is presenting a Resource Page on the Diocesan website that was launched during Catholic Schools Week. This page is meant to provide information to assist you in your own faith development as you guide your children. In my pastoral letter, “Lighting a Fire in the Heart of Our World,” one of my goals was that our schools would be intentional in their role of evangelization. This new resource is a visible sign of that role. There will be articles of interest and links to brief lessons from Bishop Robert Barron and others. Some of the materials that will be available are also being used in the schools as teachers intentionally instruct students in the role of science and our Church. Also, our website will link parents to the websites at each school that will have information on the faith formation activities at each parish/school community. I invite everyone to visit the diocesan Resource Page as well as the pages at the local schools. <https://diometuchen.org/school-resources>

During my visits to schools, I hope I will have the opportunity to see some of you there as well. I am well aware of the sacrifices that you have made to send your children to Catholic school. I am forever grateful to my parents for providing me with a Catholic school education. It was the perfect extension of my family life and an invaluable foundation for me. I am keeping all of you in my prayers, and I ask you to pray for me as well.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen