



DIOCESE OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS

OFFICE OF THE COADJUTOR BISHOP

P.O. Box 1399 † Great Falls, Montana 59403 † (406) 727-6683

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Easter Season 2023

A Vision for Catholic Schools

The conversations and discussion about Catholic Schools in Great Falls continue and will soon expand. We are seeking to build on the firm foundation of our schools as we look to a bright and vibrant future of Catholic Education.

Someone asked me to share my vision for Catholic schools. Let me begin that conversation.

Catholic Schools are an essential and vital part of who we are as faith filled people and communities. The education and formation of our children is of utmost importance for the family, faith communities, society, and for us! The final assignment or mission that Jesus gave to his disciples before he ascended to heaven is to make disciples and teach. Jesus also gives that mission to us. The mission of our Catholic Schools is to foster and highlight the dignity of each person. Our schools seek to form the whole child, with their salvation and the salvation of everyone as the ultimate goal. We seek to form good citizens of this world, who love and serve God and neighbor. Our schools enrich society with the leaven of the Gospel, while seeking our ultimate destiny to become saints.

We emphasize the inalienable dignity of each human person, including their spiritual dimension. Catholic education is not merely an instrument for the acquisition of information and skills. Catholic Education seeks the development of the whole person, created in the image and likeness of God. Catholic education is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person. An integral education seeks to help each student develop intellectually, physically, psychologically, morally, and religiously. Our schools help prepare our children for abundant and blessed life in our communities, country, and world as well as ultimately heaven.

Our schools are a community and communion of persons and even more importantly, a genuine community of faith. Our schools seek to form community among all involved; the interactions of students with teachers; the cooperation between educators and the bishop; the involvement of parents; and the school's physical environment.

The involvement and participation of parents is critical to our school's mission and life. There must be close cooperation with the family. Our schools compliment and assist the parents' in their primary role of educating their children.

Our Catholic schools will seek to provide an integral education, fostering love for wisdom and truth, integrating faith, culture, and life. We need to be accessible, affordable, and available to all, seeking to build the community of believers, evangelize the culture, and serve the common good of society.



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We need a strong Catholic school system. A system that truly works together. We can do so much more together than we can do separately. Our schools must be open to all, as we seek to serve all. This is a huge task, but it is more than that, it is ministry. It is who we are called to be as a faith community and we don't do this alone, Jesus is present and works with us to accomplish this ministry.

For the immediate future, we will continue to discuss the mission and vision of our schools with parents, teachers, students, and staff. We will look at our schools, our administrative and governance structures, and the physical environments. We will bring alignment in textbooks, resources, tuition, salaries, pastoral leadership, and parish support, just to name a few.

For the upcoming school year 2023-2024, we will continue to lay the groundwork for a unified Catholic school system in Great Falls, focusing on our mission. Things will not look much different in our schools as we do important preparation to live our mission and ensure the success and viability of our schools. If we do not work together, or if we simply stay with the status quo, our schools will fail.

But I know that our schools can and will succeed, grow, and thrive! Much work needs to be done and even more questions need to be answered, but together we will do this important work and ministry. The future is indeed full of hope as we look to a unified school system, pre-K through high school, ministering together for the benefit of our children.

I met with the teachers and staff members of our schools on April 17 to continue this important conversation and vision.

We will also have an initial meeting with parents, parishioners and anyone interested in Catholic Education on Tuesday, April 25 at 7 pm, at the University Center on the campus of the University of Providence. All are welcome! I commit to continuing these conversations.

In this Easter Season, please keep our students, families, teachers, staff, schools, and each other in your prayer as we seek to follow Jesus's mission to teach our children.

Easter Blessings!

+ Jeffrey M. Henig
