

## CHALLENGES

*This is the fifth in a series of short essays designed to illuminate and promote discussion of important issues regarding the state of our parish. Terri Sobieralski, Principal of Notre Dame School, addresses parishioners this week on the **Challenges** facing NDS. Please note: The entire series of **Challenges** can be found on our website, [www.stjohnthebaptistchico.org](http://www.stjohnthebaptistchico.org).*

What is the value of an education? More specifically, what is the value of a high quality, time-tested, comprehensive K through 8 Catholic education? Many would say (accurately, I believe) “priceless.”

Our parish has been the home of just this type of education for over 80 years. That’s 80 years of formation in the Faith...80 years of moral education and patriotic values...80 years of producing some of the best scientists, writers, mathematicians, and historians in Chico schools...80 years of service and contributions to our city, nation, and world.

The excellence continues. Just this spring, Notre Dame 7<sup>th</sup> grader Ryan Axtell received the grand prize for his entry into the Diocesan Vocations Essay Contest. Notre Dame students and families donate countless hours of service to projects such as St. Jude Hospital Cancer Research, the Viet Nam Orphanage, and the Jesus Center. They take part in a plethora of Diocesan events including the Academic Decathlon, Religion Competition, Speech Contest, and Mental Math Bowl. All of this is accomplished by students who are immersed in a curriculum that is rigorous and **challenging**. Notre Dame takes pride in the fact that students do not need to enter high school to begin college preparation. It starts here.

Education remains critically important in personal formation, teaching students how to live “the Good life” or how to live well so as to best serve themselves and become active and contributing members of their families, communities, cities, their nation and ultimately be able to live with God for all eternity. Notre Dame School’s Catholic education does this by developing the whole person through spiritual and academic formation based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Catholic education is not free. How do you decide what your child’s or grandchild’s education is worth? Is it worth making some sacrifices to give your child or grandchild this opportunity? Many parents, past and present, will tell you it is worth every penny. They know it provides a better return on their investment than any alternative use of their funds. If you want this type of education that NDS offers for your child or grandchild, but don’t think you have the funds, please come to talk to me about your situation. There may be scholarship funds available to help you.

Tuition and fees have always been the main source of revenue for the school, but you, as a parishioner of St. John’s, contribute to the success of NDS through a yearly subsidy the parish provides. THANK YOU FOR THAT! There are also a number of individuals, many of whom are former students, or parents and grandparents of past students, who contribute directly to the school because they believe deeply in the spiritual, academic, and character formation that we provide. If you would like to give a child a life changing opportunity for a great Catholic education, we will help to identify a child whose family values this education, but needs financial assistance. You will certainly be in the prayers of the family that receives your help.

It is a **Challenging** time to be a Catholic school. However, today’s culture is in great need of our contribution. We offer an education deep in Catholic culture, rigorous academics and we uphold parental rights and responsibilities regarding education. While our costs continue to rise, thanks to the generous support of parishioners and individual givers like you, our doors are open to over 200 students who will be the future leaders of our Church and nation. For more information about opportunities for donors, or education for your child, please contact me, Terri Sobieralski, Principal Notre Dame School, [tsobieralski@ndschico.org](mailto:tsobieralski@ndschico.org). (530)342-2502.

For general comments, please feel free to contact Greg or Cathy.

Greg Webb  
[gregwebb623@comcast.net](mailto:gregwebb623@comcast.net)  
530)891-0845

Cathy O’Toole  
[cotoole@stjohnthebaptistchico.org](mailto:cotoole@stjohnthebaptistchico.org)  
(530)893-8760