

A new school year is here: Time to reflect and pray about the transitions



The photos are all over Facebook...

Bright smiling faces (mostly), new book bags, shiny shoes, fresh haircuts, clean school buses, and some teary-eyed Moms (and Dads).

The new school year has started for most of the schools in our area. As a matter of fact, our grandson Tyler started third grade this morning at Piney Ridge Elementary School in Sykesville. Both Tracy and Stephen walked him to the bus stop with cameras in hand (from their smart phones). Even their sweet dog Stella was on hand to see all the children off to their first day of school.



Our grandson Tyler was back to school on Monday

I'm not going back to school...again:

For me, the start of the new school year, as always, brought the anticipation of new beginnings and challenges.

And then I remembered... I'm not going back to school. Again.

This is the start of the second school year since my retirement from John Carroll in June of 2014.

It was a new and strange experience last year to not be there for the first day of the new school year after 33 years on campus. My husband and I tried to fill up our newfound freedom. We even went to the beach.

Read about "My first time at the beach in September: Collecting wisdom from the sea."

Change, change, change:

But transitions can be tough. Not only for adults who may be experiencing change due to retirement or new jobs, but also for all the children who are experiencing new changes in their lives... Including those who are new to preschool or kindergarten, those starting elementary, middle or high school, and all those making transfers to new schools in new areas.

Hopefully, we pray, the parents and teachers of those most affected by change this school year will provide much comfort and will guide our children in their transitions with patience and compassion.

What's the toughest part of back to school?

I have heard from quite a few parents and children who share that the challenges in starting a new school year include:

- reestablishing a weekday/school night routine after the freedom of summer vacation,
- having earlier bedtimes,
- packing lunches again,
- waking up to the alarm clock's early call,
- getting back in the habit of doing homework,
- balancing school, sports, and other outside activities,
- and much more.

Every household is different and thus faces different challenges.



A prayer from the patroness of Catholic education:

One of the principal patron saints of Catholic education is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. She started the Catholic school system here in the United States under the direction of our first bishop, Archbishop John Carroll.

The following prayer from her writings is a wonderful way to start each day this year, especially for teachers and older students.

Prayer of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:

*O Father, the first rule of our dear Savior's
life was to do Your Will.*

*Let His Will of the present moment be the first rule
of our daily life and work, with no other desire but for
its most full and complete accomplishment.*

*Help us to follow it faithfully, so that in doing what
You wish we will be pleasing to You.*

Amen.

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Another great prayer for the new school year is from Sadlier Publishing Company:

It is excellent for teachers, parish catechists, and for families too:



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***May your first weeks of this new school year be filled with new adventures
and a smooth transition to a new routine.
May God richly bless our families and our teachers!
Amen.***