

The constancy of Catholic education

Catholic schools in our country have their roots in the rich soil of the Baltimore church. Here in Baltimore, nearly 200 years ago, the seeds of the apostolate of Catholic education were sown, cultivated and nurtured by such visionary women as St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Mother Mary Lange. The legacy of these two women ignited the courage and witness of other men and women to follow the example of Elizabeth and Mary to start Catholic schools all over the country.

Yet, as the years have come and gone and as the academic demands of education have increased, there is one sustaining universal factor that remains constant just as in the days of Elizabeth Ann Seton and Mother Mary Lange. Our Catholic schools continue to treasure traditions; they are solidly grounded on the foundation of the teachings of the church. This gives us our Catholic identity that defines who we are and what we proclaim. We believe that our Catholic schools are faith communities where the Gospel message is taught and lived. No matter how technologically advanced we become, how sophisticated our curriculum or how excellent our standardized test scores, it does not come at the expense of losing our Catholic identity. Our Catholic schools do possess and continue to seek out excellence, but it is done in concert with our Catholic identity and heritage.

Here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore no matter what document you review, whether it is the strategic plan “As One Body...We Celebrate...We Challenge...”, the Archdiocesan Course of Study, the Statements of Beliefs, the Standards of Excellence for Teachers, the School Board Manual or the Factors of Viability, every single publication reminds us that what we do and who we are centers on our Catholic identity. It is a constant reminder that our mission, no matter at what level, must always focus on how we not only care for the mind but also for the soul.

From all of those who have preceded us in Catholic education to all those now in the apostolate and for those who follow us, there is constancy that is the hallmark of our Catholic schools. That constancy is our Catholic identity which is identified by knowledge of our faith, worship, service, community, moral formation and living as disciples in one’s own personal setting. No matter what challenges we must face or what changes must occur, one thing will endure – our schools will always remain

Catholic.

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