

Office of Faith Formation
Diocese of Orange - Marywood Center
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August 29, 2008

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2008-09 School Year!

Thank you for choosing a Catholic education for your daughter or son. I am very aware that we live in challenging economic times. As the cost of education necessarily continues to increase, I realize that your family is faced with a challenge and a choice. Your support of our Catholic Schools assures me that you recognize the value of the spiritual formation we offer and that you know it is worthy of your sacrifice.

In addition to a holistic, inclusive learning experience and a challenging curriculum, the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Orange provide a solid foundation in the tradition and values of our Catholic Faith. There is no greater gift that you can give to your child. A Catholic education offers each student the opportunity of academic success and the building blocks of religious and moral character.

I am confident that our principals and teachers will provide capable guidance and compassionate direction as they seek to open new experiences and horizons through the experience of learning. I hope and pray that the year ahead will offer your student academic advancement, personal growth and spiritual enrichment.

Last Year, **Bishop Brown** announced his special two-year plan for the financial support to the most challenged schools in our system. In a fourfold plan of debt relief, tuition assistance, administrative support and strategic planning, he is generously using resources of the diocese to invest in the future of these schools. As we enter into the second year of this special plan, I am grateful for this generous demonstration of his heartfelt commitment to our important work of education. Bishop Brown has continued his commitment to provide tuition assistance funding. This year, fifteen of our schools will be involved in an intense program of strategic planning under the guidance of *Catholic School Management*.

This year, our diocese will host the annual convention of the NCEA - National Catholic Educational Association. This important meeting takes place the week after Easter (**April 14-16, 2009**) at the Anaheim Convention Center. It will bring more than 8,000 Catholic educators from across the nation to Orange County. This convention is an invaluable and enriching professional growth opportunity for our teachers and school personnel, who will be *required* to attend. Most likely, you will note that your school has made some calendar changes to accommodate this significant event. These changes have been made to give our teachers the opportunity to participate in the convention and have an abbreviated Easter vacation. I appreciate your understanding and patience and I hope that these adjustments will not be an inconvenience to your family.

It has been some time since we received Bishop Brown's pastoral letter to the diocese about adult faith development, [*Learning Our Faith, Loving our Faith and Living Our Faith*](#). Its message continues to be relevant! In his letter, he reminded each one of us of our personal lifelong responsibility to continue growing in our own faith. Catholic Schools cannot teach the faith to your children unless you are involved! Young people will not believe a message that is not reinforced by the values and example that they witness at home. Your own regular Sunday Mass attendance is an important place to begin! Please work with us to build the church of tomorrow!

New Website: We continue to work on the development of our Catholic Schools website. Unfortunately, we did not make as much progress last year as we had hoped! You will find the site at: <http://www.occatholicschools.org>. (It can also be accessed through the website of the Diocese of Orange: <http://www.rcbo.org>, where you will also find important information and resources about the Catholic Church in Orange County.) We hope that the website will become an increasingly important tool to link home and school. It will provide important contact information and should enhance our support of your role as the first teachers of your children.

CSI - Diocese of Orange. CSI is the name of the quarterly newsletter about Catholic education in our diocese. That's "*Catholic School Information*," not "*Crime Scene Investigators!*" It will be published in September, November, January and May. Parents will be able to access the newsletter for important updates and information at the Catholic Schools website.

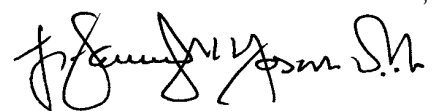
Communication is vital to the success of our efforts on behalf of your children. We will welcome nearly **twenty-thousand (20,000) students** through the doors of our **forty-two (42) Catholic schools** this Fall. We promise to offer each one of them an education that will prepare them spiritually, academically and personally for the world that awaits them on graduation day. That is a big task; some challenges and misunderstandings may be inevitable, but good communication is our best tool to resolving difficulties!

Good communication with your student's teacher(s) and principal will make this a successful year! Get to know them, so that you can work together for your child's success and growth. If you have a question, need or concern, call the appropriate individual(s) at the school to discuss the matter. It is surprising how often a call comes to my office about a matter that has not even been discussed with the teacher or principal. The best solutions to our difficulties occur when they are directly addressed at the local level.

Let's all work together, communicate openly and keep the big picture in focus. If misunderstanding persists, we will be happy to assist and support you. Open communication is the best way for you to support your student's educational experience!

I pray that we will each have the patience, grace and vision to face every challenge which may arise with an attitude of service and understanding. **Best wishes to you and your child for an enriching and successful school year in 2008-09!**

In Christ our Savior,



Fr. Gerald M. Horan O.S.M.
Vicar of Faith Formation
Superintendent of Catholic Schools