



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

Quote from *Renewing our Commitment...*

*We, the Catholic bishops of the United States, wish to offer our deep gratitude to those individuals who staff our Catholic elementary and secondary schools, the dedicated lay and religious administrators and teachers.*

Do you remember someone who left a great impression on you? For many of us, I would say it was a teacher or administrator in a Catholic school. A person, whose interest and influence are as vivid in our memory today as they were ten, twenty, maybe even fifty years ago.

Teachers and administrators in today's Catholic schools are leaving those same impressions. Called to serve in the educational ministry of our Church, men and women, religious and lay, new to education and long time veterans to Catholic school teaching, continue to embrace the missionary spirit; bringing God's word and God's love to all with whom they work, live and teach.

In accepting the invitation to teach and lead in Catholic elementary and secondary schools, Catholic school educators have responded to the Lord's call to "go out to all the world and tell the good news." Their commitment to creating and sustaining faith-centered student communities rooted in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and imbued with the desire to foster a respect for truth and a love of learning, a hallmark of our Catholic faith, rings as true today as it always has.

What is that persistent call that beckons thoughtful and faith-filled teachers to teach in our Catholic schools? The Lord whispering, "come follow me." What blessings do they experience that strike that balance with the sacrifices they are often called to make? The joy of helping a student discover God's creation. There are certainly many other school environments that have fine academic cultures, strong visionary leaders, and resourceful and productive partnerships between home and school. The call our Catholic schoolteachers answer is that of the Church to come and see what the Lord has done to serve our Church.

Catholic schoolteachers accept the call to empower their students to become disciples themselves. They are blessed with the opportunity to teach young people the stories of God's love of them and the promise of life eternal. They commit themselves to develop communities that reflect the culture of kindness, respect, forgiveness, compassion, love, intellect, humor and perseverance. For all this we thank them sincerely.

The contemporary Catholic schoolteacher embodies the same intrinsic virtues and values as those who have gone before them. They value the dignity of each person, they honor the differences and diversity of the students before them and, they embrace the challenge of bringing Christ to the lives of their students. How fortunate are those students to know they are loved and valued; children of God and heirs of heaven.

The gratitude we have for our Catholic schoolteachers and leaders is deep and profound. In prayer, let us remember the men and women, religious and lay, who paved the way and those who now carry on our Church's mission of evangelization in communion with God and each other.

Most Reverend John B. McCormack  
Bishop of Manchester

November 25, 2009