January 30, 2022

Dear Catholic School Educators and Staff Members,

As we approach the end of the first month of a brand new year, a month with typical Michigan frigid temperatures and the occasional heavy snowfalls, and still replete with all the variants of COVID-19 and the ongoing struggles that the virus brings to every aspect of our lives, we also are about to celebrate our annual observance of “Catholic Schools Week”. This year’s theme is “*Catholic Schools: Faith, Excellence, Service”.* This theme accurately captures the principles which guide everyone who makes our Catholic Schools possible, and which keeps them vibrant and strong, even in the midst of the ongoing pandemic and all the other challenges facing us. Those three principles of “Faith, Excellence and Service” are lived day-in and day-out by all of you, our Catholic School Educators and members of our Catholic School Staffs, as well as everyone who volunteers their time and energy to our schools.

Throughout the nearly two-year ordeal of this pandemic, you have remained champions of those three principles---you have been living examples of our ***Catholic Faith*** which underpins who we are; you constantly strive for***Excellence*** in everything you do; you give of yourselves in loving ***Service*** to your students; and more than that, you instill those same principles of “Faith, Excellence and Service” to all your students. The untold number of ways you care for every dimension of developing your students’ minds, bodies and souls is exemplary. And again this year, I find myself once more expressing my gratitude and admiration, on my own behalf and that of our entire Diocese, for the heroic ways you serve. In some ways, this school year has been even more challenging as you navigate the many ups and downs. Those ups and downs include of course the intense emotions, reactions, and varied opinions concerning what we do and how we do it in regard to keeping our students safe while continuing to make sure that the learning process is not diminished. Your efforts make an incredible difference, not only in the lives of the students and their families, but in the lives of everyone who sees the evidence of your sacrifices and the great witness you provide to your ministry of educating our children in our Catholic Schools tradition. I am immensely proud of, and grateful for, all your efforts.

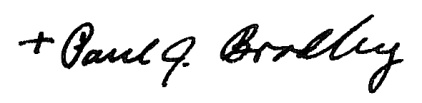
While our celebrations of Catholic Schools Week may once again be scaled down this year, I hope you are able to find ways of truly celebrating the amazing Communities of Faith you help to build in our Catholic Schools as you help to shape the generation who will lead our world in the days to come.

Recently Pope Francis tweeted (to his close to 20 million followers): *Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life*.

Each day that you prepare your classes, interact with your students, and witness to your genuine Christ-like care and concern for those entrusted into your care, you are performing those very “acts of love” Pope Francis described; you are indeed “giving life” as he said – impacting the students in ways that they will remember and carry with them for the rest of their lives. Your generous and sacrificial gifts of loving service are very evident, not only to your students and their families, but by everyone who sees how our Catholic School students live their lives. And needless to say, our Lord Jesus not only sees the great work that you do, but also blesses it with His Grace and Favor. He sees your good works and is with you every step of the way.

Extending my heartfelt gratitude and assuring you of my fervent prayers of gratitude for you and your families, and humbly asking for your prayers for me and for our Diocese, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley  
Bishop of Kalamazoo