

VALUE OF A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

BY DEACON RICK WAGNER *PRESIDENT, GUERIN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL*

The pandemic has had a financial impact on many families. It may be causing some parents to question whether or not they can afford Catholic education for their children. I have been involved in Catholic education for nearly thirty years, more than twenty of those years as an administrator. I hope that consideration is given to the **value** of the education rather than cost alone.

With free public education nearby, there may be some who are taking a hard look at the **cost** of educating their children at a Catholic school. Allow me to share my perspective on its **value**:

Faith—Faith permeates every aspect of Catholic schools. We instruct in the faith through the work of our Theology Department. We celebrate our faith at school Masses. We pray at the beginning of each day and at the beginning of each class. Every meeting begins with prayer. We offer Reconciliation and Adoration regularly. The staff regularly participates in faith formation sessions. All members of the school community are experiencing ongoing faith formation simply by being in the building.

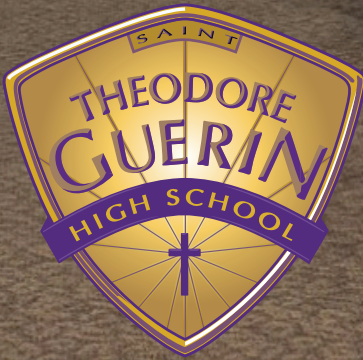
We keep an open dialogue going with God and we feel his presence in the building at all times. Most importantly, we make a concerted effort to live our faith and share our faith with others—to be intentional disciples. We take care to treat one another with kindness and charity and look to serve others through ministry activities and outreach programs. We are not perfect, but we work to hold ourselves accountable and seek forgiveness when we fail. **Faith is alive.** What dollar figure do you put on that? What value do you place on it?

Accountability—Each of us is blessed with God-given abilities. *“Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on the lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house” (Matthew 5:15).* It is the goal of every member of the faculty, staff, and administration to help students reach their full potential—to shine their light. We do this by helping them maximize their God-given ability. We challenge them, call them to task, guide them, and affirm them. **We love them.**

Perhaps most importantly, we expect them to hold both themselves and others accountable. The same is expected of the adults in the building. Great things happen when young people realize their potential and then help others do the same. What dollar figure do you put on that? What value do you place on it?

Community—An active **community that genuinely cares** about one another can accomplish amazing things. Catholic school students are not simply one of 200 or 400 or 700 kids in the building. They are not GPA's or SAT scores. They are young people with unique gifts and individualized needs. They carry around baggage of self-doubt, struggling relationships, the pressure to succeed and quite simply, the pressure to be a good kid when there are so many avenues of destruction available in our culture. However, everywhere they turn they find support. At home or at school (their other home), they have people dedicated to keeping them on the right path and loving them, even at those times when they are not all that lovable. What does that cost? What value do you place on that?

I am not sure what you would come up with if you punched all of this information into a calculator. To steal a line from the old MasterCard commercials—a Catholic education, **priceless.** The experience of a Catholic school will continue to pay dividends to you and your children for many years to come. *That's* value.



**GUERIN CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**

15300 Gray Road,
Noblesville, IN 46062
(317) 582-0120
GuerinCatholic.org