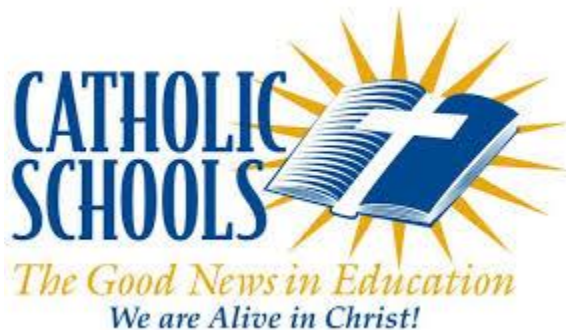


The Catholic School Difference

From DeSales Weekly

It is rare for the Catholic Church to be praised in the mainstream media recently. The scourge of clergy sexual abuse and the painful response of the church's leadership in most cases provide an understandable rationale for this trend. Nevertheless, the church continues to serve in remarkable ways, advancing the Gospel and caring for those in need. Catholic education remains a stellar example.



Saturday's *Wall Street Journal* published an editorial—yes, an editorial—praising the legacy of Catholic schools, with an opening laud to “the thousands of nuns who have served as principals.” The piece reflects on a study out of University of Santa Barbara that compared “children in Catholic schools with those in public schools and other private schools, religious and secular.” The results were “statistically meaningful.” The Catholic school students were less disruptive, arguing, fighting, acting

impulsively, and getting angry less frequently than non-Catholic school students. The Catholic schoolers were “more likely to control their temper, respect others' property, accept their fellow students' ideas, and handle peer pressure.” The editorial board declared: They were more self-disciplined.

The editorial concluded how the study gives evidence for the role of religion in the lives of young people, especially in its ability “to channel youthful energy into productive self-control.” With an eye on the difficulties in urban public schools and the tendency for students living in poverty to be served by them, this study and the editorial offer more than praise for Catholic schools. Both affirm the power and presence of Spirit-driven teachers and principals to form communities of faith and learning as a bulwark against evils such as gun violence, substance abuse, theft, and lax sexual mores.

As this month of June brings many to congratulate worthy graduates, let us be sure to take a moment to thank, praise, and pray for those women and men who lead our youth in the safe and strong schools we proudly call Catholic. The nation and church are in their debt.

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