

## In His Own Words

**Archbishop Murphy's thoughts and reflections on the mission and ministry of Catholic education**

**Montana Catholic Register  
Reflections - weekly column  
"The Value of Catholic Education"  
October 3, 1978**

"A Catholic school fulfills its educational responsibility in providing an excellent academic program and opportunities for extracurricular involvement in sports, organizations, clubs, etc... But the very reason for the existence of a Catholic school is to provide a climate and environment of faith which is encouraged to grow and mature through a deeper understanding of what our faith means, as well as the example and witness of administrators and teachers to the importance of the Eucharist and sacraments and prayer."

**Montana Catholic Register  
Reflections - weekly column  
"Catholic Education - A Part of Our Heritage and Legacy"  
February 6, 1979**

"A Catholic school offers a viable option to parents for an alternative education for their children at the grade school, high school, and college level. At each of these levels, a Catholic school must provide the same benefits in secular subjects which a public school offers. But a Catholic school, if it is truly to be Catholic, must also offer a faith environment which will be conducive to the young person's growth in a relationship to the Lord and the Gospel. This environment is a primary responsibility of administrators and teachers working in relationship to the parents of our students. A Catholic school must have teachers who are willing to witness to the religious beliefs and traditions which we share. The traditional

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values of our religious heritage of the importance of the Eucharist and the sacraments, the moral teachings of the Gospel and the Church, the practice of our faith in Word and Sacrament cannot just be courses in a curriculum, but rather lived experiences by teachers and parents, administrators and students.”

### **Address**

**National Catholic Education Association Convention**

**Philadelphia, PA**

**“Recommitment Ceremony for Teachers”**

**April 17, 1979**

“For many, the heart of Catholic education whereby the Church fulfills its teaching mission is found in these physical structures throughout our land where Catholic schools exist and religious education programs are conducted. But this view of Catholic education misses the central core, the heart, the focus of Catholic education today. That central core, that heart, that focus of Catholic education is the teacher who fulfills the teaching ministry of the Church, the teacher who announces the Good News of the Gospel, the teacher who incarnates a lifestyle that reflects the Lord Himself. The most important dimension of Catholic education whether in Catholic schools or religious education programs is the teacher who becomes the voice of the Lord, who shares in the teaching mission of the Church, who proclaims the Good News to our youngsters and adults who are the People of God of the Church today.”



**Montana Catholic Register**

**Reflections - weekly column**

**“Catholic Education - A Gift we must Preserve”**

**February 5, 1984**

“Catholic education thrives in our country today when it makes a difference - when through the efforts of all involved, the values of our Catholic faith tradition are taught, lived and exemplified in the lives of teachers, administrators and parents. Catholic education makes a difference when religious formation and education follows a defined curriculum which is not only experienced in the daily teaching of religion, but is also experienced in the priority which it has over all other concerns. Catholic education must provide the best possible education in the secular subjects, but Catholic education will survive and flourish when it offers “something more” whereby it becomes a beacon of hope to an entire community. When Catholic education does this, it becomes easier to meet the challenges of financial demands and future growth.”

**Archbishop Murphy’s thoughts and reflections on Catholic education**



**Montana Catholic Register**  
**Reflections - weekly column**  
**“Is There Any Value in Catholic Education?”**  
**February 10, 1985**

“In general, do parents of students get a satisfactory return on the investment in a Catholic education? The answer is a definite ‘YES’ when Catholic schools share a vision and teach values, when the school community is rooted in the Eucharist, when parents and teachers witness to students not only by what they teach in a classroom but by what they live in their daily lives, when Catholic schools are seen and appreciated as part of the total mission of education/formation to all, when parents and countless others are willing to continue to sacrifice in order to offer their children ‘something more’ which is possible in Catholic schools, and most of all when a school dares to be ‘Catholic’.”

**Address**  
**Billings Parent Teacher Association**  
**Billings, MT**  
**“Catholic Schools”**  
**March 25, 1986**

“If the religious education/formation element is not at the heart of a Roman Catholic school in accord with Roman Catholic teaching and tradition, then we do not have a Roman Catholic school; rather, we have a private school that teaches some religious values when convenient. As Bishop, I cannot support such a school. As Bishop, I cannot ask parishes to support such a school. I believe that there is almost a hesitancy to emphasize who we are as Roman Catholics, and yet it is that identity which will make our schools successful. In talking with Bishops from different parts of the country, I sometimes hear of grade schools and high schools with long waiting lists. I ask how this became a reality. Invariably, the response is the same: we dared to be Catholic.”





### **Homily**

#### **Mass of Thanksgiving**

**Eastside Catholic High School**

**Bellevue, WA**

**December 15, 1987**

“A Catholic high school may be known in a community for its athletic teams, its academic programs, its various clubs and organizations, but if a school dares to use the name ‘Catholic,’ then it announces to everyone that it has taken the risk to be faithful to the Gospel and the traditions we share as a Roman Catholic faith community. This risk is lived out in the witness, example and commitment of an administration and faculty to the values and beliefs, the challenges and the worship which give us an identity as disciples of Jesus today. That same witness and example must also be shared by parents who want to pass on the gift of faith to their sons and daughters.”

### **Address**

**Archdiocese of Seattle: In-Service for Principals and Teachers**

**Seattle, WA**

**“Catholic Schools - Communities with Memories”**

**September 19, 1988**

“At this moment in time, I believe the critical question we must face is whether our approach to Catholic education through Catholic schools is one of maintenance or mission. To have a maintenance approach towards Catholic schools is to tolerate what is happening, to witness the slow demise of the presence of Catholic schools, to forget what Catholic schools can do and have done for young people here in Western Washington. A mission approach to Catholic schools asks us to look at possibilities for growth and development, to seek ways in which we can share with others in a more effective way the invaluable gift of Catholic education through our Catholic schools, especially with the poor and the disadvantaged.”

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“Teachers and administrators in Catholic schools are ministers of the Church. As such, they should possess some essential qualities and reflect expected behavior patterns if they are to fulfill what is asked of them. Some of the essential qualities needed in persons involved in Catholic education today would include: Spiritual and religious, interior, and interpersonal and relational gifts. By these qualities, I mean that Catholic school personnel should be persons with a vocation to the work of the Gospel as reflected in the mission and ministry of the Church. They have a well developed sense of Church and recognize its human and divine elements. Moreover, they are emotionally stable and self-confident who accept responsibility for themselves, their commitments, and their psychological and physical fitness. A final quality would be our ability to relate to a wide spectrum of people with sensitivity, compassion, empathy and justice.”

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**Address**

**Archdiocese of Seattle Teacher's Day  
Seattle, WA  
"Out from Under the Basket"  
September 13, 1991**

"A teacher or administrator in any educational system is given a rare and invaluable invitation. You are invited to intrude into the mind and spirit of a child. You are asked to excite the mind of that child; you are asked to communicate knowledge, facts and wisdom to a developing human spirit. You are asked to share values with students which will give them a new perspective on who they are and the gifts they possess. But, my friends, as teachers in a Catholic educational system, you are asked to give so much more: you are asked to give the example of your own lives to the values and vision of the Gospel. A student will soon discover the wisdom you have to share; a student will also discover the commitment which is yours; a student will hear the words not spoken and the student will learn far more from who you are than what you do. This is part and parcel of the discovery which is inherent in the whole educational process."



**Address**

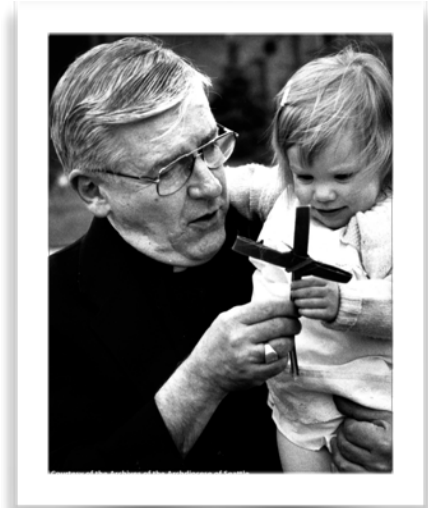
**Catholic Schools Week  
Tacoma, WA  
"A City of Destiny - A Time of Destiny"  
January 29, 1992**

"Catholic schools must also find ways to reflect the rich diversity of who we are as a community of destiny. Catholic schools cannot be a haven for the rich or affluent. Catholic schools must seek to welcome students from all economic backgrounds and become a rainbow of color, ethnicity and religious traditions. Without this diversity, we do a disservice to our children."



**Homily**  
**Catholic Schools Mass**  
**“Celebrating the Gift of Service”**  
**St. James Cathedral**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**May 15, 1992**

“I have to admit that I am concerned about our future as a human community and as a Church. Yet, my concern is dissipated whenever I have an opportunity to visit one of our Catholic schools. The difference is not only the building or the curriculum or the symbols of religious faith and tradition. The difference is the teacher who recognizes that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life in his or her life and dares to introduce young people to the Good News proclaimed by Jesus Christ.”



**Catholic Northwest Progress**  
**In Joy and Hope - weekly column**  
**“The Value of Catholic Schools”**  
**August 27, 1992**

“At the heart of the success of Catholic schools is the unique partnership between parents and teachers. Catholic schoolteachers are a dedicated group of people who have the unique challenge of recognizing that their position is a ministry, a vocation in the best sense of the word. As a ministry of the church, teachers in Catholic schools must reflect the values of the Gospel and our Catholic faith tradition not only in what they say, but in who they are. This is a responsibility of all ministers in the church today. A mission approach to Catholic schools asks us to look at possibilities for growth and development, to seek ways in which we can share with others in a more effective way the invaluable gift of Catholic education through our Catholic schools, especially with the poor and the disadvantaged.”

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“Parents sending children to Catholic schools must recognize their role and responsibility in the educational and formational process. Catholic schools cannot fulfill their mission and purpose unless the home reflects the values taught in the school environment, The example of parents through church attendance and school involvement is critical to the success of a Catholic education which will have an impact on the total life of the student.”

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**Catholic Northwest Progress**  
**In Joy and Hope - weekly column**  
**“Are Catholic schools worth the effort?”**  
**February 4, 1993**

“The answer to the question of whether Catholic schools are worth the effort has to be a resounding YES. More than ever before, Catholic schools are needed if we are to fulfill the mission and ministry of Jesus in the most effective way possible. Jesus commanded his disciples to teach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. If we want to pass on the message of the Gospel and our faith tradition to our children, then Catholic schools become a priceless gift. If this gift is to be a reality, however, Catholic schools must be faithful to their mission of faithfully sharing the teachings of the Gospel and our tradition not only in what is taught, but in the lived example and inspiration of teachers, staff and administrators. And the key ingredient for a quality Catholic education is the need for parental involvement and example.”

**Address**  
**Schools Dinner**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**February 6, 1993**

“What is the difference we offer to young people which prompts me to ask for your help? It is the daring to let young people know there are values and religious convictions which can make a difference in their lives and in our world; it is the courage to say that each and every young person is created in the image of God and has worth and meaning as human beings; it is the experience of community where ideals come alive in the care and concern which gifted and generous teachers share with our young.”

**Homily**  
**CACE - NCEA Mass**  
**St. James Cathedral**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**December 2, 1993**

“The ministry of Catholic education is a ministry we share with students, not on our terms, but on the terms of a good and gracious God who invites us to build the foundations of Catholic education on the solid rock of the Gospel message. The Gospel message must be the curriculum that enlivens the enterprise in which we are engaged. The measure of supervision and the quality of personnel must be in proportion to our commitment to ask whether we dare to introduce ourselves and our students to the person of Jesus.”





**Catholic Northwest Progress**  
**In Joy and Hope - weekly column**  
**“Catholic Schools Week”**  
**January 25, 1996**

“Catholic schools must also recognize their obligation to serve the poor. The Catholic school system cannot afford to serve only those economically able to pay the full cost of Catholic education today.”

All of these quotes have been taken from documents stored in the [Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Archive](#). This archive contains more than 1,100 written works of the archbishop. The archive is a rich resource where both lay and religious alike can go to read and learn about the Catholic Church on a wide variety of subjects.



**Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy's Episcopal Coat of Arms**

“The motto I choose represents what I aspire to in my service as a bishop of the church. It is a simple and direct message with strong roots in the teaching of the Vatican Council. For me, the challenge of ministry today is to provide people with a spirit of optimism and the desire to make a difference.”

**Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy**

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