

## Reflections

by the  
Most Reverend Thomas J. Murphy



### The Value of Catholic Education

One of the inner drives within each of us as human beings is to share and transmit our values and beliefs to others. In a sense, this is the definition and purpose of education, especially Christian education for our young people and ourselves.

I am very much aware of the tremendous value of Catholic education for our children in Catholic schools as well as for those children receiving instruction and formation in various catechetical programs throughout the diocese. Last week, I had the privilege of stopping by informally at Billings Central Catholic School. I really enjoyed talking with some of the students, meeting the principal and some of the teachers, and especially having the opportunity to offer Mass for some of the students. Earlier last month, I had visited all the grades at Sacred Heart Grammar School in Miles City.

In both schools, I was very conscious of that extra special gift which is shared with our young people in a Catholic school - and that is the **gift of faith**. 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.

The Catholic schools in our diocese depend so much on the generous gift of our sisters and priests who staff the schools along with our dedicated lay teachers. In a special way, we are grateful to the parents and supporters of Catholic education for the tremendous financial commitment and investment they are sharing with our children.

The same dedication and commitment is also evident among our teachers and parents who are responsible for the catechetical programs operating in so many of our parishes. In this joint endeavor between teachers and parents, we are transmitting the values of our faith to the next generation.

Young people today are searching, asking, probing for the meaning of their lives and the best way in which they might use their gifts. Catholic education in Catholic schools and in catechetical programs could well be the best way in which we share our values of today with the leaders of tomorrow. Let us pray for the success of the religious education programs in our diocese.

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The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women is holding their bi-annual Convention this week at the Great Northern Hotel in Billings from Sunday, October 1 to Tuesday, October 3rd. Interested women in the Diocese are encouraged to become involved with the parish and diocesan Council of Catholic Women...Respect Life Week is being celebrated throughout the nation this week. It might be a good time to look for ways in which we as individuals and as families can share the values of life with others...I would encourage those who are able to do so from the clergy and religious education programs in the Diocese to attend the workshop on Effective Administration in Religious Education which is being held at the Ursuline Convent in Great Falls on Oct. 24, 25 and 26th. Mr. Tom Emmett, who is facilitating the workshop, has an excellent reputation in this field.