

# TO TEACH WHO CHRIST IS

A Newsletter for the Campaign for Parishes, Catholic Education and Faith Formation November 2021

## Thanks Be to God

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

— Psalm 100:1–5

These verses ring true throughout the year, but we hold them closer to our hearts during this month of thanksgiving. It's through this passage, we are shown a great example of devotion and gratitude to God, and it's our prayer that we continue to exemplify that same gratitude throughout the *To Teach Who Christ Is* campaign.

The blessings God has given parishes, students and our local communities are countless, and we are so grateful to our dedicated donors who help bring God's plan for this campaign to fruition. We pray you have a blessed Thanksgiving and are able to spend time reflecting on the blessings God has bestowed upon us.

## St. Odilo School in Berwyn Provides a Positive, Loving Environment to Phoenix Scholarship Recipients

Around 20 years ago, the Sanchez family immigrated from Mexico to the United States and settled in Cicero, Illinois. Victor, a handyman, and Maria, a stay-at-home mom, have four children, Andrea (25), Alexa (15), Victor (13) and Angelica (11), who all began their childhood education in public school.

A few years ago, the couple's second oldest child, Alexa, had traumatic experiences with bullying at the public school she attended. When Alexa's situation got worse, Victor and Maria decided to look into other options and stumbled upon St. Odilo School, located at 6617 23rd Street in Berwyn.

“At first, we could only afford to send Alexa to St. Odilo,” said Maria. “We really liked that it was a smaller school and felt more like family. Alexa really enjoyed attending St. Odilo, and her attitude changed completely.”



Pictured above are the Sanchez's youngest children who currently attend St. Odilo School in Berwyn.

Transferring Alexa to Catholic school made such an improvement on her school experience that Maria decided to connect with Ruby Martinez, director of admissions at St. Odilo. Ruby helped Maria develop a payment plan affordable enough for Maria and her husband to also enroll their younger children. Both Maria and Victor have witnessed the impact the school has had on their children and family.

“Prior to attending St. Odilo, my children would complain about going to church because they didn't understand why it was important to go,” said Maria. “Now, they rush us out the door because they don't

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want to be late for church on Sundays. I also appreciate that they are learning right from wrong, and using Alexa's experience with bullying in public schools to improve the way they interact with others. I have enjoyed watching them grow in their Catholic faith."

The past year and a half have been extremely difficult for the Sanchez family. Victor is immunocompromised and had to take a leave of absence from work to stay healthy during the beginning of the pandemic. During this time, Victor and Maria decided to pull the kids from St. Odilo and participated in e-learning at a public school. It was a difficult transition for the family, but they didn't have the money to continue enrolling their children in Catholic school and were unsure about what the future would hold for their family.

"During e-learning with our public school, I really noticed a change in my youngest child, Angelica," said Maria. "She was really depressed because she missed St. Odilo, and her teachers and friends, so we decided to enroll them at St. Odilo again this year."

Ruby Martinez informed the Sanchez family about the Phoenix Scholarship and because of the financial assistance, the family was able to re-enroll their two youngest children this fall.

"We are very grateful to the donors of this program," said Maria. "Thanks to their generosity, my kids have an opportunity to go to a school where they can be happy and learn about the importance of Catholic faith. God bless the donors to this program."

To learn more about St. Odilo School, please visit [school.saintodilo.org](http://school.saintodilo.org).

## U.S. Department of Education Honors Two Chicago-Area Catholic Schools as 2021 National Blue Ribbon Recipients

The Archdiocese of Chicago recently announced that Prince of Peace School in Lake Villa has been recognized this year by the U.S. Department of Education with a Blue Ribbon Award. The National Blue Ribbon Award is presented to a school based on its overall academic excellence or progress in closing student achievement gaps. In addition, Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein, an independent Catholic school, was also recognized with a 2021 National Blue Ribbon Award. Catholic schools in the archdiocese have received 119 Blue Ribbon Awards.

"We are incredibly proud of the two Chicago-area Catholic schools for being recognized with distinguished Blue Ribbon Awards," said Greg Richmond, superintendent of Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools. "The benefits of a Catholic education develop a child holistically through faith formation, academic achievement and the importance of civic and community engagement. With the challenges of a global pandemic, it's gratifying to know the efforts of our teachers, administrators, students and their families have been deservedly honored."

Both schools were recognized under the category of "Exemplary High Performing Schools," meaning the schools are among the state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests. Both schools have earned this prestigious honor previously: Prince of Peace School received the award in 2014 and Carmel Catholic High School in 1985, 1996, 2002 and 2007.

Strengthening Catholic education is a key element of *To Teach Who Christ Is*, with up to \$150 million in campaign funds directed to the Catholic Education Scholarship Trust. Scholarships from this endowed fund are awarded as Phoenix and Caritas scholarships. Both scholarships ensure access to Catholic education for families throughout Cook and Lake counties.

To learn more about the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools, please visit [schools.archchicago.org](http://schools.archchicago.org).



## CAMPAIGN UPDATE

**Overall Campaign Goal: \$350,000,000**

Total Raised to Date: \$408,829,022\*

Percent of Goal Pledged: 117%

Pledges Paid to Date: \$275,405,515

Percent Paid to Date: 78%

\*includes cash, documented pledges and bequests

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