



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is...

Shelby Foote, historian and author of *The Civil War* comments on the effects of the war, and among his insights is: *Before the war it was always the United States *are*, after the war it was the United States *is*... it made us an is.* This is a major question we must ask of our Catholic schools today: Are we an “are” or an “is?” The answer to this question makes all the difference in the future of Catholic school ministry in the Church of northern Colorado.

Our schools must be an “is” in the same sense as the United States—unified by a common tradition, purpose and vision yet distinctive, proud and self-governed. Catholic schools today are not and can not be fully parochial as in the past. In order to be recognized among the numerous good education options today, Catholic schools must have commonality of mission, voice, language, and policies. They are branded as the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools. In this way, they are an “is” insofar as they embody a consistent set of characteristics, impressions, tone, feelings and attitudes that come immediately to mind – and heart – when a person hears about or sees one of our Catholic schools.

In these extraordinary economic times, urgency has had a profound effect on our Catholic schools. These times and the resulting shortage of funds have necessitated difficult decisions and actions affecting all the schools in our brand, some much more than others. This is the hour in the life of our schools that we must strive to remain an “is.” At this time we should take nothing personally, for if we do our spiritual growth and journey together suffers. Urgency can make us all better. This could be a good time in the life of our schools.

We must all realize there is no “thing-fixer” for complex issues like we now face. There is no magic money. There is no thick notebook with tabbed solutions. Some say we need vouchers and more Religious to staff our schools. That is true but the reality is that neither is going to happen in time to make any difference in our schools for years to come. Some: say the Archdiocese needs to step up and solve this problem. I agree as long as we understand and act on the fact that WE are the archdiocese. It is the people in the church of northern Colorado that can take action to preserve our school through stewardship. Prayer, along with time, talent, and treasure are the best answers to the issues facing our schools. We must continue to build community, to be good to each other, and not to look outside of ourselves for solutions.

Each of our 39 schools effectively delivers our brand promise of being a Christ-centered community for the formation of the whole person—mind, heart, body and soul. They do so in a distinctive way, utilizing their unique culture, traditions, and celebrations. In the next weeks, the Denver Catholic Register will be featuring Catholic schools, all united in community and mission but each having a unique personality, a “secret sauce,” that is theirs alone. I invite you to read and enjoy their stories and then, in turn, help in any way you can.

May these difficult times continue to make us an “is.”

To learn more about the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools, please visit our website at <http://www.archden.org/index.cfm/id/44>.

If you would like to participate in a dialogue or leave a comment for Superintendent Thompson regarding Catholic schools, please visit him at <http://www.catholic-school-community.com/>.