



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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Dear Catholic Schools Communities and Friends,

Celebration! What a great word. Four syllables with a strong crescendo. Next Sunday millions around the world will witness either the 49ers or the Chiefs celebrate a Super Bowl win. March Madness will provide many celebrations on the road to the Final Four, and who doesn't love a beautiful wedding or just singing *Happy Birthday*? For those of us blessed to share in our sacred mission, Catholic Schools Week is the opportunity to celebrate who we are and what we do. This is our victory parade, and we deserve every mile of it because we win every day.

We celebrate when we see the exquisite joy of watching the face of a child light up when she or he pronounces their first word, or reads their first sentence out loud. We experience the same elation when we see the unbelievable wonderment in the eyes of a child as they realize we have given them the key to unlock the secret to a lifetime of reading and learning. Is there anything more moving than when that student in a special education class shoots their hand into the air with that unique confidence that only comes with *knowing* the answer?

Most importantly, we celebrate our faith when we see a transformational glow come across a child when he or she embraces the knowledge that Jesus will love them unconditionally and be by their side throughout their life. So much for the World Series being a big deal...

While we celebrate our Catholic identity within our schools, it is particularly gratifying to see that role played out in the larger community, as our students are of service to their neighbors. This year in particular, our schools are taking every opportunity to share the joy of generosity and sacrifice in service projects. Whether in collections for Catholic Charities, the Catholic Relief Service, local soup kitchens and homeless shelters or nursing homes, our students are *living* their faith, not just talking about it. What a great example they are setting for us all!

Isn't that something? In celebrating our schools, we adults can learn a thing or two from the children *we* are teaching. Talk about winning! Be happy this Catholic Schools Week, because there is so much to celebrate.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York

