

# A valuable education

With Catholic Schools Week in full gear through Feb. 5, Michael Deegan, superintendent of schools of the Archdiocese of New York, says this is a perfect time to showcase the value of a Catholic school education.

## **Why is this year's Catholic Schools Week mission relevant?**

This year's mission, anchored by the values of faith, excellence and service, provides a perfect snapshot of daily life within our Catholic schools, where students are taught a faith-based, values-infused curriculum. In fact, each month is assigned a Catholic value, which is featured throughout all lesson plans. Catholic school students in the Archdiocese of New York, through

their lessons and their faith, understand that as children of God they are part of something greater than themselves.

## **Catholic school enrollment is up. Why do you think that is?**

In a world seemingly always in conflict of one sort or another, these days of pandemic, war and social upheaval, we are a port in the storm. We teach. The children learn.

Families noticed that we had been open safely for in-person learning consistently since September 2020 while many government schools had difficulty in doing so. Since then, Catholic schools have evolved from being the quaint school on the corner where the children wear uniforms, to leading the national discussion on education

in America.

## **How have the challenges of COVID strengthened the schools?**

Like everyone else, we are exhausted; most of all our principals and our teachers. They have been heroes all, each of them. I have no doubt that our schools – the people who come to them every day to teach and learn – have already grown from the experience. Having seen the darkest days of COVID up close, especially in our poorest school communities, and now seeing the clouds begin to part, the students and teachers begin each day ... knowing for a fact that prayers are answered, as evidenced that they are all still here, together.

**Joanne Kroeger**