



Up Front & Personal Faith, Academics and Service in Our Schools

▲ by Sister Angela Gannon, C.S.J.

In the week following Labor Day, students in Brooklyn and Queens will return to school. Some will attend Catholic schools or academies; others will choose charter schools, public schools, magnet schools, private schools or home schooling. There are many options in a large urban area.

How fortunate we are in the Diocese of Brooklyn to have 99 campuses for our schools and academies, 20 Catholic high schools, and three colleges/universities. These numbers give testimony to the values that parents espouse – especially in these difficult economic times.

Although each Catholic school develops its own mission statement, there are always three areas: faith, academics, and service. We can say that each educational institution from pre-kindergarten to the university level is forming educated disciples of Jesus. That is the overarching mission that provides common ground for the mission of Catholic education.

We are proud in the diocese to have formed partnerships between the elementary schools/academies and Catholic high schools. That partnership is demonstrated by science and math teachers providing instruction to seventh and eighth graders, high schools offering their gyms and science labs to these students, or the high school that provides summer journalism workshops. In addition, St. Francis College, Brooklyn Heights; St. Joseph's College, Clinton Hill; and St. John's University, Jamaica, collaborate with the superintendent in providing a plethora of programs for teachers, administrators, board chairpersons and members. One cannot underestimate the value of these partnerships.

The number of students who achieve beyond the norm for State and City testing at the elementary level and the extraordinary number of Catholic high school students who receive scholarships to colleges and universities clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the academic programs. Initiatives in the development of electronic books and in technology in general assure parents that their children are receiving up-to-date instruction.

In addition to formation in the faith and its excellent academic programs, the Catholic schools/academies also foster a spirit of service. Often associated with preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, service projects and activities span each grade of each school. Whether helping the elderly, tutoring children, or collecting food for those who hunger, each activity reminds the student of what it means to be a follower of Jesus – one who lives out the Beatitudes in often small but significant ways. Service projects also take place in public, charter, and private schools. But the distinguishing characteristic of service in our Catholic schools/academies is its relationship to our faith and to our mission of forming educated disciples of Jesus. Children are taught to do what Jesus might do, to be aware of the needs of others, to develop spiritually, and to understand what it means to be a young Catholic person in today's world.

I referred to the partnerships that our schools/academies have with our high schools and universities. We must also acknowledge and celebrate the partnerships that the educational institutions have with parents or guardians of our children. Without their involvement, the education of the child falters; with their involvement it flourishes and thrives.

As we prepare for the new academic year, we pray that our children will be safe, that their minds will be opened, that they will respond generously to others' needs, and that they will indeed become educated disciples of Jesus.

Sister Angela is the diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education and Formation.

THE TABLET

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1712 Tenth Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215 • 7200 Douglaston Pkwy, Douglaston, NY 11362
T: 718-499-9705 • F: 1-800-683-6602 • E: ewilkinson@diobrook.org • W: www.thetablet.org

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Bishop DiMarzio's Calendar

Wednesday, Aug. 31, to Friday, Sept. 2

Opening House Retreat, Cathedral Seminary Residence of the Immaculate Conception, Douglaston

Friday, Sept. 2

Evening Prayer and Barbecue with Seminarians, Cathedral Seminary Residence of the Immaculate Conception, Douglaston

Teacher Terminated Over Abuse Allegations

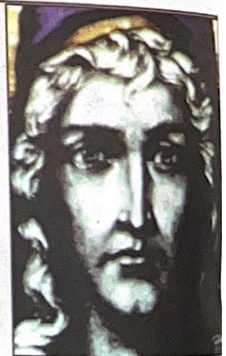
Paul Gruber, a teacher at Fontbonne Hall Academy, Bay Ridge, has been terminated after an investigation into allegations of alleged abuse proved credible. The alleged abuse took place between 1986 and 1988, with young female members of the St. Thomas Aquinas Youth Group, Park Slope.

Upon notification of the alleged abuse, Gruber was immediately placed on leave pending a thorough investigation of the matter and all diocesan procedures were followed.

In an effort to ensure the safety and security of all children, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio announced the allegation and findings to the parishes where it was known Gruber has worked. The bishop requests prayers for the women who presented the allegations. "Even the passage of time has not dimmed their memory of a difficult experience encountered at an early stage of their lives. The diocese continues to offer them pastoral assistance," said a spokesperson for the diocese.

The bishop, once again, says he apologizes to all victims of abuse and encourages any person who has been abused by clergy or church personnel to report the abuse to the diocesan reporting line: 888-634-4499. All calls are handled with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

Joseph of Arimathea



First Century
Feast: Aug. 31

In all four Gospels, Joseph was the brave Jew who asked Pilate for Jesus' crucified body and buried him. Mark calls him "a distinguished member" of the Sanhedrin, while Luke notes that he "had not consented to the council's plan. In Matthew he is "a rich man," and John says he is a secret disciple of Jesus "for fear of the Jews." He shares his feast with Nicodemus, another Jew who went to Jesus secretly. From medieval times Joseph was associated with Holy Grail legends.

Saints for Today

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