



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ARCHDIOCESE COMMEMORATES NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK
CELEBRATING INCREASED ENROLLMENT, COVID RESPONSE, AND NEW FACILITIES**

Catholic schools across the tri-county Archdiocese of Los Angeles, spanning Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties, will be celebrating [National Catholic Schools Week](#), starting today through February 5, with special Masses, open houses, fun activities for students, families, parishioners, and community members in-person and virtually.

“Our Catholic schools in the Archdiocese exemplify this year’s National Catholic School Week theme, *Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service*,” said Senior Director and Superintendent of Catholic Schools Paul Escala. “We have experienced a 2.6% system-wide increase in enrollment, academic performance growth and many of our schools have received grants to make facility improvements and add new academic programs for our students.”

In response to the recent surge of COVID-19 cases, the Archdiocese is partnering with local public health departments to supply schools with over 300,000 N95 and surgical masks, more than 40,000 rapid tests and numerous on-campus testing access to maintain a safe in-person school environment. “While these have been challenging times due to the pandemic, our schools rose to the challenge by effectively transitioning to distance learning and then back to in-person classes safely. The success of our Catholic schools is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students, teachers, staff and families,” added Escala.

Schools across the Archdiocese have activities planned to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, including Masses for students and faculty, reciting special prayers for the nation, while others are honoring teachers, parents, and essential workers. Students will also take part in celebratory sports and team-building activities throughout the week as well as service activities, both locally and beyond, as they demonstrate the values and faith they gain through their Catholic education and learn how to make the world a better place.

A highlight of this year’s Catholic Schools Week activities will be a dedication and blessing of a new building at St. Gertrude the Great School in Bell Gardens, led by Archbishop José H. Gomez on Wednesday, February 2 at 8:15 a.m. The new school building will include a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) laboratory, a faculty lounge and meeting room ---which the campus has never had--- a counselor’s office, physical education equipment garage and a new TK (transitional kindergarten), kindergarten and first grade classrooms, which replace modular units and will offer their youngest students a place of permanence as they grow and learn.

“This building will significantly impact both our school and parish community now and into the future,” said St. Gertrude the Great Parish Pastor Fr. Nabor Rios. “The addition of a brand-new STEM lab, offers St. Gertrude the Great students an opportunity to achieve their goals and dreams as they move into a competitive and demanding world where these skills are both needed and valued.”

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Some schools celebrating Catholic Schools Weeks are St. Paul and St. Thomas the Apostle in Los Angeles, St. Patrick and St. Charles Borromeo in North Hollywood, Our Lady of the Rosary in Paramount, and St. Louis of France in La Puente.

Since 1851, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese provide faith-based education where students receive tools for success in college and in their future careers focused on a commitment to service to their local and global communities. Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese boast innovative programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), dual-language immersion and robotics.

Since 2016, the [C3 IGNITE](#) program has deployed over 25,000 connected iPad devices to more than 155 schools in the Archdiocese through its partnership with Sprint, now a part of T-Mobile and participation from several generous donors. Devices are used to help students and families remain connected during these challenging times. The devices are not only used as a classroom tool by students for their projects, research, and homework, but can also be used in homes without internet access, as a mobile hotspot and/or a direct connected device.

Catholic schools rely on contributions and other support to keep tuition low, so that all students have a benefit. This year, the [Catholic Education Foundation](#) (CEF) granted more than 10,100 tuition awards with a \$13.1 million budget to students in poverty who attend 220 of the 240 archdiocesan schools. In addition, CEF has awarded an additional 2,000 newly enrolled students this school year with the New Enrollment Initiative (NEI 2.0) funded by an anonymous donor.

Since its founding in 1987, CEF has raised more than \$186 million and awarded more than 170,000 scholarships. Other CEF programs and activities are donor-designated and include the SOS (Save Our Students) Program, Visual Arts Program, Sports Equipment Program, and the Big Yellow Bus Program.

Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. Now entering its 48th anniversary year, CSW has traditionally been held the last week in January.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is the largest provider of faith-based education in the nation. Statewide, Catholic schools save California more than \$2 billion in educational funding each year.

To learn more on Catholic education in the Archdiocese visit lacatholicschools.org and follow [instagram.com/catholicedla](https://www.instagram.com/catholicedla) and [facebook.com/catholicedla](https://www.facebook.com/catholicedla). For information about 2022 Catholic Schools Week (January 30 – February 5) visit [Catholic Schools Week 2022](#).

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