



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of the Bishop

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Do you know that Abraham Lincoln lost several elections before becoming President of the United States or that Albert Einstein could not speak fluently until he was nine? And are you aware that Walt Disney was once fired for not being creative enough?

Despite their early struggles, those men ended up accomplishing a lot. So what does it take to succeed? There are many factors that contribute to success in life, but a strong foundation rooted in Jesus Christ can surely lead anyone to achieve amazing things.

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2020, it is a great time to recognize the solid foundation that only a Catholic education can provide our precious young people. When I visit Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, I am always impressed by the faith of our students and families. They put that faith into action through compassionate and enthusiastic service to others. Our schools also have the highest academic standards and are constantly finding innovative teaching techniques to help children learn and grow. Indeed, our Catholic schools provide a complete education experience that reflects the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2020: **Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.**

I want to take this opportunity to salute our incredible students and assure them of my continued prayers. I am grateful to so many others who tirelessly support the mission of Catholic education including parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and pastors.

As part of our Catholic Schools Week observance, our diocesan media is spotlighting alumni of Catholic schools here in Altoona-Johnstown. They credit their Catholic school experience for the personal and professional success they enjoy today. I hope you are inspired by their witness. Any of those alums or any of our current students may end up rivaling the accomplishments of Lincoln, Einstein, or Disney. May God bless them along the way, and may God bless our outstanding Catholic schools.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Mark L. Bartchak

Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak

Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown