



Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
Office of the Archbishop  
222 North 17th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

July 2016

Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskias, Ph.D., S.T.D.  
Executive Director, Catholic Education Foundation  
601 Buhler Court  
Pine Beach, New Jersey 08741

Dear Father Stravinskias:

As a member of the Catholic Education Foundation's episcopal advisory board, I'm very pleased that the Foundation is sponsoring its second annual conference on "The Role of the Priest in Today's Catholic School" at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. I know that last year's meeting was a great success. I'm sure that this year's seminar from July 19 to July 21 will build on it.

Philadelphia is ideal for such a gathering, given the history of our local church in the growth of Catholic education. My sainted predecessor, John Neumann, made the establishment of Catholic schools a top priority. In 1892, Archbishop John Ryan appointed a priest of the Archdiocese as the first Catholic school superintendent in the United States. Due to their foresight, we continue to reap a rich harvest in priestly and religious vocations, as well as lay leaders.

While our schools are now largely staffed by lay people (who are a great blessing to the education apostolate), the essential role and presence of the priest in Catholic education is well documented. This seminar is important in offering priests from around the country the skills they need to fill that role.

Please give a warm welcome to the priest-participants on my behalf. And since your schedule is quite full for the three days, I dispense participating priests from the hours of the Divine Office not prayed in common.

As you already know, I warmly support the excellent work done by the Catholic Education Foundation and, in particular, this initiative. Through the intercession of St. John Neumann may your efforts bear good fruit for our nation's Catholic schools -- which, in their turn, will be a powerful agent of that "new evangelization" promoted by another great voice for Catholic education, St. John Paul II.

Fraternally yours in Jesus Christ,

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia