

St Joseph School, a blessing to our parish, our community, and our diocese.

From the Pastor's Desk

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This upcoming Monday, our students return to school after a 12-week summer break. I, for one, am looking forward to seeing them back on campus. Summer is necessary for our students, teachers and staff to get a break from the routine, but our campus comes alive when they return from break and they feed into the lifeblood of our parish. In short, our school is a blessing in many ways. Here are some of my thoughts.

A blessing to our parish.

St Joseph School is a blessing to our parish in more ways than simply educating our students. Our parish school is the center for faith formation. It teaches our children about Church teaching, but it also provides the atmosphere and opportunity through the church itself, not simply to learn the faith, but to live it. This strengthens not only the students, but the overall spiritual life of the parish.

I think it builds a strong sense of community. The number of parishioners who graduated from SJS is amazingly high. Everyone is proud of the year they graduated, including the class of 2026. Students, families, teachers, and parishioners become more connected through shared events such as Masses, service projects, sports, and celebrations.

It builds future leaders for our parish and helps them to understand the need for outreach to our parish and community. In short, a parish school doesn't just educate students, it nurtures faith, strengthens community, and helps sustain the life and mission of the parish for generations.

A blessing to our community.

St Joseph school is not a just a place where our students receive an education, but also has a presence in our local community, especially here in Conway.

Think about our bazaar. SJS brings families together through events such as our Masses and fundraisers, but our bazaar creates a stronger relationship among neighbors and a sense of belonging that extends beyond the classroom. That is my experience here at St. Joseph.

Think about the financial blessings to Conway. SJS employs teachers and staff and it attracts families to our school because of its track record in the community and the state. Therefore, our school can also contribute to the local economy in many ways.

A blessing to our diocese.

Our Catholic school doesn't just teach subjects; SJS intentionally desires to integrate faith into the daily lives of our students. That means students are regularly exposed to prayer, sacraments, and moral teaching in a structured way. In time, I believe this helps young people who understand and live out their faith, which is essential for the diocese of Little Rock in the long run.

SJS trains future leaders. Think about vocations here in the diocese of Little Rock. Vocations whether to the priesthood, religious life, or committed lay leadership are nurtured in Catholic schools. I am convinced that over time SJS will provide our diocese with many great priests and religious down the road.

I have seen this at St Joseph School over my 3 years as your pastor. It is a blessing to our parish because our students are becoming active members of the parish. Their successes are seen in our community by the awards they receive and the skills they offer our community here in Conway. Our school aids our diocese to educate and form our children in the faith through the 12th grade with the hope they will, in turn, bless the Church in Arkansas.

As this new school year begins, pray for our students that they are open to learning what is essential to living as an adult in this world as an active member of the church. Pray for our teachers and staff that they may be living examples of what they teach and also how they live their lives. Pray for our Administrators that we may guide everyone in the direction of Christ. God bless our school. Go Bulldogs!

Father John