



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

January 2019

Dear students, faculty and staff of Aquinas College,

As we celebrate the gift of Catholic education during St. Thomas Aquinas Week, Jan. 21-28, and national Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 27-Feb. 2, I write to express my gratitude for your contributions to the blessing that is Catholic education in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. From early childhood through higher education, families and their children in our diocese have access to a lifetime of learning built upon the message and mission of Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our Catholic faith.

We have much to be proud of regarding Catholic education in our diocese. Aquinas College offers an education that is distinctively Catholic while preparing students for their future careers. Additionally, the College eagerly awaits completion of the Sister Aquinas Weber Wing of the Albertus Magnus Hall of Science which bears the name of a woman who has been a champion of Catholic education in our community. I look forward to continued collaboration with Dr. Kevin Quinn and his advisors as they build on the tradition of ensuring all students have the opportunity for Catholic education at the higher education level.

Our diocese is home to 31 Catholic elementary and secondary schools serving more than 6,550 students. This includes our largest preschool class in 18 years and our largest kindergarten class in six years. It is encouraging to see so many families choosing Catholic education for their children early in life, and it is also beneficial for the growth and vitality of our Catholic schools.

Last fall the new, independent Saint Robert Catholic School in Ada opened. We are also proud of the new curriculum standards that our alliance of Catholic schools has recently implemented. Firmly rooted in our faith, the new standards were developed through contributions from educators and theologians, including several from Aquinas College.

May we continue to take inspiration from the "Angelic Doctor," St. Thomas Aquinas, and work together to ensure that our Catholic educational communities are places where students learn, serve, lead and succeed.

Know of my prayers for you and for success in your academic endeavors!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids