



November 3, 2014

Dear Parents of 8th Graders:

As the Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas, I am thrilled that our families have so many excellent Catholic secondary education choices available for their children. From Atchison, Leavenworth, Wyandotte and Topeka to the three high schools in Johnson County, there are outstanding options for you to explore when looking for what the right high school fit is for your child and family.

In Johnson County, by virtue of their six Governor's Achievement Awards for being one of the top 5% of all high schools in Kansas in both reading and mathematics and their designation as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School's academic excellence is unquestionably known and recognized throughout the region and the country.

However, academic excellence is not the first or most important goal for our schools. First and foremost, we strive to help every student to experience God's love for them, to develop a personal friendship with Jesus, and a love for His Bride, the Catholic Church. If we succeed in this primary mission, then we will be forming young men and women of virtue who will excel in every dimension of life. The most important tool for communicating the Faith to our young people is the witness of their own Faith Life by the Administrators, Faculty, and Staff. I am so pleased with the commitment and dedication of the Aquinas Faculty to their own on-going faith formation.

One sign of a strong environment that nurtures a strong faith life in students is that 13 Aquinas graduates over the past 10 years have discerned a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life, including Fr. Vince Huber and Fr. Jaimie Zarse who are serving as priests within the Archdiocese. I am equally proud of the Aquinas Graduates who have embraced the call to Christian marriage and parenthood. The graduates of St. Thomas Aquinas are leaders in the Archdiocese, in their parishes, and in the community.

Also, a strong commitment to service on behalf of the disadvantaged in our community is one of the hallmarks of a Saint Thomas Aquinas High School education. While putting their faith into action, the young people of Saint Thomas Aquinas annually serve over 800 social service agencies in our city.

Two of the most visible examples of this are the work of the Saint Thomas Aquinas community, through their annual canned food drive, which stocks the food pantries of Catholic Charities with enough needed food to last throughout the year providing for those less fortunate across the metro area and their Teens for Life organization which is one of the largest in the country and provides significant financial and volunteer support here in our Archdiocese for the many agencies working on this important mission of our Church.

The work of our Catholic high schools is so important to the future of our Church, particularly in these times where young people are receiving so many competing and contrary messages from our society. As you continue to explore your high school options, I would invite you to look at what Saint Thomas Aquinas High School has to offer for your child and your family. I am confident you will be pleased with what you find.

Sincerely yours in Jesus, the Lord of Life,

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann