

Thanksgiving, my favorite holiday, is right around the corner. With the exception of worrying that the turkey will be undercooked, it is a no pressure holiday. It is a special day, when we put all other stresses on hold, and take the day to just enjoy and appreciate family, food, football and the abundant blessings our God has bestowed upon us.

This year, as I count my blessings, I would like to acknowledge the very beautiful people I have the joy of working with every day. The faculty and staff of St. James the Apostle School are among the finest Catholic people I have ever had the privilege of working with. They go above and beyond for their students and our school every day. Their dedication and commitment to their students and our faith does not go unnoticed by me, or by our parents and students. In fact, just this week we received a beautiful bouquet of flowers from a parent, whose daughter graduated from our school three years ago. Her note said, "To All Staff at St. James the Apostle School, Thank you for teaching and growing love and kindness. The bouquet can be divided up for anyone who needs a "pick-me-up!" Incredible!

They say, "It takes a village to raise a child" and in the world of education, we know this to be true. This African proverb means that an entire community of people must interact with children for those children to grow in a safe and healthy environment. I am so grateful for the dedicated staff of the Carmel Central School District and their partnership with us, in helping us to provide special education services to our students this year. Joseph Simoni, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services and Technology and Mrs. Gina Riggione, CPSE/CSE Chairperson, have proven to be true professionals, dedicated to the needs of ALL students, regardless of school choice. I feel blessed to work with these compassionate educators and I know I speak for our parents in saying, "Thank you for supporting our children and us, during these trying and uncertain times."

If you have been reading my Principal's Corner, you will have read about another partnership that I am blessed and grateful for this year. Michael Deegan, the Superintendent of the Archdiocese of New York, has partnered with Catapult Learning to provide every child in the Archdiocese with countless resources including STEM activities (in school and at home), afterschool extra reading and math support and on-site counseling services. In addition, Catapult provides instructional specialist to our teachers, to assist them in providing the best in school and online resources available. Mr. Deegan became the Superintendent of the Archdiocese the same year I accepted my position as Principal. In my thirty plus years in the Archdiocese, I have never known a more sincere and dedicated advocate of Catholic Education than he. I am personally indebted to him for believing in me and our school and for continuing to ensure that Catholic Education remains alive and vibrant in Putnam County!

Lastly, many of you see me every weekend. I am so thankful for the love and support of the parishioners of St. James the Apostle and Our Lady of the Lake Parish. You support us not only with your generous donations, but with your love and prayers as well. We are a family of faith and I assure you that my school children pray for you, as you do for us. Our children are the future of our church! Thank you, sincerely, for helping us to instill a life-long love of our faith!

*"The most beautiful way to start and end each day is with a grateful heart."*

