



BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.

A Message from the Maryland Catholic Conference February 27, 2013

“Everyone, it turns out, is dependent and vulnerable – and sacred and able. And the most remarkable thing about that discovery is the sheer joy of it,” concluded Michael Gerson in a Washington Post column yesterday highlighting the Special Olympics and the humanity of us all, able or disabled.

Gerson began his article describing a Special Olympics basketball game being held at Blessed Sacrament School in Washington DC.

You may know that Catholic schools have provided Maryland families a choice for educating children from preschool through high school for more than 200 years. But did you know of the many services and programs provided by our schools in Maryland aimed at assuring that students with special needs are able to achieve academic success?

Just two brief examples:

- St. Elizabeth School (Baltimore City) is a coeducational, special education school operating 11 months of the year serving grades 6-12, ages 10-21 in its middle and high school programs. The school offers educational, clinical, vocational and transition services to students diagnosed with autism, traumatic brain injury, emotional disturbance, cognitive disabilities and other disabilities, impairments and disorders.
- Our Lady of Lourdes School (Bethesda) supports students with a range of disabilities from cerebral palsy to Autism spectrum disorders, from Down syndrome to dyslexia and more. With its mission of inclusion, teachers make every effort to ensure their special needs students are integrated into the classroom life.

These students and students across Maryland are educated in Catholic elementary, middle and high schools through programs that extend from specific accommodations for individual students to schools whose entire mission is to exclusively serve the most seriously challenged special needs students. From untimed tests to one-one-one instruction, Catholic schools in Maryland offer students with a wide variety of special needs the opportunity to learn in a supportive environment while receiving the benefits of a Catholic education. The service offered by these schools highlights the extraordinary value that our schools provide, not only to our students, but also to our state.

In the Image and Likeness of God is a resource directory by the Maryland Catholic Conference giving a broad overview of the impressive range of the educational opportunities provided for children with special needs.