



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

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Father John Fleckenstein Named *Distinguished Pastor of the Year* by National Catholic Educational Association

KALAMAZOO, Mich., (January 26, 2009): Father John Fleckenstein, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Battle Creek, Mich., and pastor administrator for Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools (BCACS) has been named Distinguished Pastor of the Year by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Fr. Fleckenstein is one of 13 pastors nationwide receiving this award which honors pastors who have given outstanding support to Catholic education.

"We are thrilled and honored that NCEA has recognized Father John's outstanding contribution to Catholic School education," says Margaret Erich, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Kalamazoo. "Through his exemplary leadership Fr. John has strengthened the Catholic educational community not only in Battle Creek but across the diocese."

Father Fleckenstein has made a number of significant contributions to the Battle Creek area schools since his tenure there beginning in 2002. He helped launch the "In the Spirit of Community" capital campaign which has raised more than 10 million dollars for Battle Creek Catholic schools more than any other private campaign in Battle Creek. He has been instrumental in driving key renovations at St. Philip's High School and shepherded the opening of the state-of-the-art St. Joseph's Middle School. Additionally he was a key member of a task force that developed a strategic plan for all 22 Diocese of Kalamazoo Catholic Schools.

Award recipients are chosen from a nationwide pool of nominees and must possess a clear philosophy of Catholic education; provide spiritual guidance to the school community; participate in school activities and have the support of the school community including administration, parents and school board.

"I am honored to be recognized by the NCEA," says Fr. Fleckenstein. "I share this award with all those who have made the necessary sacrifices and commitments to make Catholic Schools grow and thrive. It is a perfect complement to our celebration of

Catholic Schools Week. This award is further evidence of the unique mission of Catholic Schools, and how we are achieving the goals of that mission."

Fr. Fleckenstein will be honored with the award at NCEA's Annual Convention in Anaheim, Calif., in April.

Additional Resources Included:

Father John Fleckenstein Biography

Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools Catholic School Week Activities

-30-

The Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo is the territory of Catholic churches and community led by Bishop James A. Murray. The diocese was founded in 1971 and has grown to include 46 parishes and 13 missions as well as 19 Catholic elementary schools and three Catholic High Schools.

NCEA: Established in 1904, the NCEA is the largest private professional education organization in the world, representing 200,000 Catholic educators serving 7.6 million students in Catholic elementary and secondary schools, in religious education programs, in seminaries and in colleges and universities.