

Bishop joins Saint Francis' Blue Ribbon pep rally

Staff Report

METUCHEN – Bishop James F. Checchio joined students, faculty and staff at a pep rally Nov. 10 to celebrate the achievement of Saint Francis Cathedral School being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Catholic school of the Diocese of Metuchen is one of six nonpublic elementary schools in New Jersey recognized this year as “Exemplary High Performing Schools.” Student achievement in English and Mathematics was ranked among the highest in the country.

Saint Francis Principal Barbara Stevens and Assistant Principal Judi Monteleone accepted the school’s 2017 National Blue Ribbon plaque and flag during a Nov. 7 awards presentation in Washington, D.C., led by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. Both Blue Ribbon commemorative items were unveiled to the school community at the pep rally.

“I am grateful to Msgr. Robert Zamorski and Mrs. Stevens and to all of the wonderful teachers and staff here at Saint Francis for their dedication and



Students, faculty and staff of Saint Francis Cathedral School in Metuchen, a parochial school in the Diocese of Metuchen, were joined by Bishop James F. Checchio for a schoolwide pep rally Nov. 10 to celebrate the school’s designation as a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School. Saint Francis is one of six nonpublic elementary schools in New Jersey to be recognized this year as “Exemplary High Performing Schools.” ~ COURTESY OF

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hard work that made this recognition possible,” Checchio said. “I’m grateful for all the Saint Francis Cathedral School students and families, too, as you celebrate this distinguished recognition. What a wonderful honor for your

school — and for our Diocese!”

Checchio had special words for pupils’ parents, thanking them for sending their children to a Catholic School and for their support of the school.

“They give a lot of themselves so that you can have a great school to come to every day ... they plan family activities and fundraisers; they serve as coaches, class parents and chaperones; they volunteer in the lunchroom, library and computer lab,” he said.

“Today, be sure to go home and say thanks to Mom and Dad for making that choice and for making sacrifices to make sure you come to a place where you are loved and where you learn how to love others, as Jesus Himself loved others ... a place where your relationship with Jesus can grow as well as your knowledge of math and science and language arts and technology — and all the other important topics you learn about here at Saint Francis Cathedral School. Be sure to thank your principal and your teachers, too.”

Last week’s awards presentation was part of a two-day U.S. Department of Education ceremony recognizing 292 public and 50 nonpublic U.S. schools.

“This year, for the first time, the NCEA held a reception for the 38 Catholic schools across the U.S. that were named Blue Ribbon Schools,” Stevens said. “We began in prayer and asked for God’s blessings. The fact that, as Catholic educators, we were united in prayer and in mission was an especially powerful experience and one that I will not soon forget.

“Today, and throughout the rest of the academic year, we’ll celebrate the hardworking students and outstanding faculty, who made receiving this distinguished award possible. We are grateful for our school families and for the contributions of all who were involved in the application process — some of whom have since retired but join us here, today, for this wonderful occasion.”

In the Diocese of Metuchen, Saint Francis is the fifth National Blue Ribbon School. Previous award winners are Immaculata High School of Somerville in 1998, Saint Matthias School of the Somerset section of Franklin in 2001, Immaculate Conception School of Annandale in 2013 and Saint Augustine of Canterbury School of Kendall Park in 2016.