

## Your Email Address is needed!

We need your email address! We have 7 contracts up for negotiation this year and we need to be able to reach out and contact you so that we can update you on the progress of those negotiations. In addition, from time to time, we may wish to share issues of importance in our union or in your school. Contacting you by email is the fastest, most efficient way for us to stay in touch.

If you wish to inform us about important news in your school all you need to do is send an email to [ddvt2001@gmail.com](mailto:ddvt2001@gmail.com) for publication in our Newsletter, which will be sent to you on a monthly basis. We will not sell your email to anyone. If you have not given your email address to your delegate already, please do so as soon as possible. Retirees can email me directly at [ddvt2001@gmail.com](mailto:ddvt2001@gmail.com). Please note that this is my new email address.)

Thank you and Happy New Year,  
Dan DiPleco, Secretary Treasurer  
New email address: [ddvt2001@gmail.com](mailto:ddvt2001@gmail.com)

Lay Faculty Association union dues and associate fees have increased by \$1.00 per month. Retiree dues remain unchanged.

**Have a great 2018!**

## Lay Faculty Association Local 1261 Newsletter



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## The President's Message.....

On behalf of the LFA Executive Board, I would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year full of much success and all good things!

*Ciro Quattrocchi*



## The Future of Catholic Schools

Archbishop Timothy Dolan lays out a strong case for the importance of Catholic schools. He is correct in asserting that Catholic schools are necessary for the overall health of the church in the United States and that the church cannot afford to lose many more of them.

The number of Catholic schools has declined dramatically since the mid-1960s and unfortunately the decline has accelerated in the past decade. The loss in the number of Catholic students is more dramatic, however, than Archbishop Dolan indicates. In the mid-1960s practically all students in Catholic schools were Catholic. While the total population of Catholic schools is about 2.2 million (2008-2009), Catholics number only 1.6 million in grades 1-12, a decline of more than two-thirds since the high point 45 years ago and this despite a larger and wealthier Catholic population.

The reasons for the decline are as Archbishop Dolan states: demographic shifts, increased costs, and a shift in the thinking of some American Catholics about the importance of the schools. But the archbishop overlooks another factor: the lack of strong leadership in the church to build a sufficient number of Catholic schools in areas where the Catholic population has moved in droves. And while some American Catholics have abdicated their responsibility to support Catholic schools, many have not. The surveys my colleagues and I have conducted at The Catholic University of America as part of diocesan planning studies have indicated strong sentiments among older Catholics to support Catholic schools, especially among those who have grown children who attended Catholic schools or who have attended Catholic schools themselves. Often they have not been formally asked to support the schools. We need to change that.

The growing Latino population, almost all of which is Catholic and currently underrepresented in our Catholic schools, is also of concern to the church and its future. Approximately 275,000 Hispanic students attend Catholic schools, about 12 percent of all students in Catholic schools. But according to the 2009 report of the Notre Dame Task Force on the Participation of Latino Families in Catholic Schools, this represents only about 3 percent of the number of Hispanic students of school age. The church must make a greater effort to provide meaningful experiences for Hispanic Catholics to help acculturate them into the American church and enroll their children in Catholic schools.

The success or failure of Catholic schools depends on the initiative and foresight of the Catholic population and its leadership. Every Catholic school must have a strong academic program, an equally rigorous program of religious instruction and a culture that has a clear Catholic identity. The future of Catholic schools depends upon the willingness of Catholic parents to spend more of their discretionary income on tuition, the support of all parishes for Catholic schools, and the implementation of strong programs of stewardship that will help all parish ministries, including Catholic schools. Let's heed the call of Archbishop Dolan, regain our nerve and renew our confidence in the jewel that is the Catholic school.

*Written by: **John J. Convey** is the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Professor of Education at the Catholic University of America*