



Dear Friends,

If you are a parent of an elementary school-aged child(ren), and have wanted to send your them to Catholic school but found the cost beyond your range, there is some incredibly good news for you. On September 30, the State of Arizona put into effect the ESA (Empowerment Scholarship Account) program.

In summary, what this means is parents are able to opt their children out of public district or charter schools and receive a portion of their public funding deposited into an account to pay the tuition at any school of their choice, including a Catholic school. **The current amount that a parent will receive for each student is \$6,500 per year. This amount would cover the tuition at Our Lady of Mt Carmel school. This opportunity is available to 100% of K-12 students.**

I join all who are grateful to Gov. Ducey and the State Legislature for passing this just law. However, it also seems to me that this is simply restoring justice to what, for so long has been an inequitable situation. The vast majority of the parents who send their children to Catholic schools pay property taxes on their homes, which goes to fund the public school system. Then on top of those taxes, if they pay Catholic school tuition, they are paying twice.

The history of state governments opposing the use of public monies to pay for Catholic education is a long and sad story reflecting a deep-seated animosity towards the Catholic Church (look up the history of the Blaine Amendments). This new law, in my opinion, rights a long-standing wrong that we've endured since the late 19th century.

You can get a good overview of the program and its requirements at <https://www.azed.gov/esa>