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## **Shanley and Sullivan students take the ACRE test**

Father Charles LaCroix

Students at Shanley High School and Sullivan Middle School wanted to see how they match up with other Catholic high schools and middle schools around the country in regard to knowing their faith. The results: awesome!

For the last 20 years, the National Catholic Education Association has issued Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education as a tool to help assess a student's faith knowledge. The assessment helps religious education programs identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

Last May, eighth-grade students from Sullivan and 12th-grade students from Shanley took the tests. The ACRE tests cover a broad range of faith knowledge. Questions cover the four pillars of catechesis — creed, sacraments, commandments and prayer — and are further categorized into eight "domains" of the faith — the Trinity, church, liturgy, revelation, morality, church history, religious practices and Catholic faith literacy.

Shanley scored a group average of 82.6 percent. The national average score for Catholic high schools in this country is 70.8 percent. What about the national average for faith formation programs? The parish average is 60.6 percent nationally. Shanley scored considerably higher in both cases: higher than other Catholic high schools in the country, and higher than faith formation programs in the country.

Sullivan also did quite well with ACRE. Sullivan students scored a group average of 79.2 percent. This compares with the national average for Catholic middle schools of 71.2 percent and the national average for faith formation programs in parishes at 59.6 percent.

ACRE also indicates three categories of faith knowledge: Advanced, Proficient and Needs Improvement. In the Advanced category, a student needed to score 88 percent or higher. Shanley had 47.1 percent of its students in this category. Nationally, 19.3 percent of Catholic high school students and 11.5 percent of parish high school faith formation students were in this category.

Sullivan had 37.8 percent of its students in that top category. Nationally, 16.7 percent of Catholic middle school students and 4.9 percent of parish middle school faith formation students were in this category.

*Father LaCroix is chaplain for Shanley High School and Sullivan Middle School in Fargo.*