February 16, 2022

Pause and Ponder

Companions on the Journey—Matthew 11:28-30
February Spiritual Work of Mercy –Comfort the Sorrowful

The shortest verse in the Gospels may be found in John 35:11, “And Jesus wept.” It appears in the story of the Raising of Lazarus, when Jesus arrives after Lazarus has died and been placed in the tomb. This verse shows the humanity of Jesus at the loss of his friend. His presence to Mary and Martha, despite Martha’s grief in stating that if Jesus had come sooner, her brother would not have died, highlights Jesus’ ability to comfort the sorrowful. Of course, we know the story’s end in that Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and restores him to life. Often at sorrowful times, we look for Jesus and await his miracle to remedy a situation. Because the situation is not resolved in the manner we desire, we can become discouraged in thinking that the Lord is not present. Yet, it is at these very moments that Jesus is most present, carrying us or others along without even awareness of Him. He sends others to bring His presence to those most in need. Perhaps this month we are called to bring Christ to others who may be sorrow-filled in some way. Let us be open to this invitation from Him.

Yours in St. Francis,

Mr. Richard D. Hart

Principal
THANK YOU....THANK YOU....THANK YOU!!!!

Our Second Annual Day of Giving was a huge success! **Thanks to you, our St. John the Beloved Families, we raised $24,977.87!** Your generosity and commitment are awesome! We could not have done this without you! If you would still like to make a contribution, cash or checks can be sent in to school or placed in the weekly offertory. We are also grateful to our St. John the Beloved Parishioners who so far this fiscal year have donated $4595.00 from offertory to the School Development Fund.

Dates for a dress-down day, movie afternoon and special school wide treat will be announced soon.

During Catholic Schools Week, the students, faculty and staff enjoyed a week of special events, including dance parties in the gym for our youngest students, Bingo for grades K-8, Chick-fil-A lunch and a bowling field trip and the return of the 8th grade volleyball game. A school wide Mass was celebrated and Peacemaker Award recipients for the first trimester were announced. Thank you to our Home and School Association for providing our faculty and staff with a delicious breakfast and lunch as well as providing ice cream sandwiches, pretzels and a pizza lunch for the entire school.

**Scenes from Catholic Schools Week**
St. John the Beloved Catholic School Service Project for the Homeless

How can elementary and middle school students be of service to those in need? This question continues to be a challenge to many teachers of these age groups as they look for creative and practical ways to serve the needs of the greater community. In their efforts to administer to the needs of individuals who are struggling especially during this time of COVID-19, St. John the Beloved School students and parents, for the second year in a row, have joined with the Ministry of Caring to provide much needed toiletry bags for those individuals who find themselves homeless and without adequate supplies to fulfill their daily personal needs. Toiletry bags were created that included items such as warm socks, washcloth and soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and brush, hand sanitizer, lip aid, tissues, and other items needed. Items were collected throughout the week by the seventh grade students and then assembled and packed by the eighth grade students. The generous donations that came from the SJB school families and faculty during Catholic Schools Week will help the Ministry of Caring care for over 100 individuals who find themselves without adequate shelter in this difficult time.

THANK YOU to all of our SJB Families for their generous support of this outreach project to the Ministry of Caring.
**Current COVID-19 Information:**

It is vital for record keeping that you continue to report all absences to the school nurse, as well as to their teachers. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

We have created a SJB COVID-19 Portal page on our website. Go to www.sjbdel.org and hover over the “Parents Tab”. Click the last link “COVID-19 PORTAL” which will have information such as SJB Statistics, CDC information, Sign-up for free testing, Testing Sites, Vaccine Information, Test to Stay information, Quarantine protocols and Diocesan Guidelines. The statistics page will be updated daily. Notification letters will no longer be sent out.

**2021-2022 School Calendar**

Please remember to check the school calendar regularly for additional events and more details. **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all activities are tentative.** We will evaluate our ability to host each event as we are closer to each date keeping in mind the most current guidelines.

**Field Trips and Background Checks**

With the anticipated return of school field trips, please be aware that in order to volunteer in school or as a chaperone on a field trip, you must have a current Background Clearance on file. Background clearances are good for 5 years from the date they are issued. If you are unsure whether your clearance is still in effect, please contact Marie Malatesta at mmalatesta@sjbdel.org. Please take the time to check your status now so you are able to volunteer when opportunities arise in the future. Thank you!

**The Report Card on Our Catholic Schools**

Students in Catholic schools receive report cards each trimester in elementary school and quarterly in high school. The information provides a snapshot of progress achieved as well as areas requiring additional attention. While the report card is not the sole measure of a student’s academic growth, it is an indicator of where one is and where one wishes to go.

In the 2020-2021 school year, the Board of Catholic Schools gathered information to issue a report card on the status of the 19 parish and diocesan schools in the Diocese of Wilmington. This data is helpful in reporting successes and charting growth for the future. It also allows the Diocese of Wilmington to compare its results to Catholic schools across the nation.
There were approximately 6316 students enrolled in parish and diocesan schools last year. Responses to the survey were received from 1416 adults. (Some responses were by family; others by individual parents in the family.) That’s a return rate of 22%, which is a respectful rate of return for an anonymous survey. Here’s what we learned.

**My child benefits from attending a Catholic school.**

75% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 23% of the respondents agreed with this statement. Such a high percentage of agreement is manifested in the support families provide – presence as volunteers and at events, financial assistance through tuition and fundraising events, and marketing the good news about Catholic schools.

**How satisfied are you with the following metrics at your children’s school?**

- **Safety** – 79% extremely satisfied + 9% satisfied = 88%
- **Character-Building** – 69% extremely satisfied + 15% satisfied = 84%
- **Academics** – 63% extremely satisfied + 20% satisfied = 83%
- **Discipline** – 68% extremely satisfied + 14% satisfied = 82%
- **Faith Formation** – 70% extremely satisfied + 11% satisfied = 81%

These results among the highest five metrics of satisfaction in the survey mirror national data about Catholic schools. If we disaggregated the data to reflect the number of years a student attends a Catholic school, we would probably parallel the national trend wherein the longer a student remains in Catholic school, faith formation moves to the top of the list as the primary reason a family chooses Catholic school.

Other areas examined included diversity/equity/inclusion (75% satisfaction rate), social and emotional well-being (78% satisfaction rate), communications (81% satisfaction rate) and (administration and teaching staff (82% administration and 83% teaching staff satisfaction rates). The survey also looked at technology, co- and extra-curricular activities, athletics, and resources.

**Does the value of the Catholic education justify the expense of the tuition?**

89% of the respondents answered “Yes”; 11% responded “No.” The result points to the commitment parents and guardians are willing to make on behalf of quality Catholic education for their children. Many families are required to sacrifice financially for their children to attend Catholic school, but they realize a Catholic education is a lifetime gift for their children.
What is the most/least important reason(s) for choosing Catholic education for your child(ren)?

Academics (47%) and faith formation (22%) are the leading contenders in the responses among eight possibilities as to why parents and guardians choose Catholic school education. The answers attributed to the least important reasons are legacy (62%) and location (20%). So the choice for Catholic school education is made based upon the national theme for Catholic Schools: Faith – Excellence –Service. It depends less upon whether or not the parent(s) attended Catholic school or the Catholic school is nearby. Families choose Catholic school education intentionally because Catholic schools make a difference in the current and future life of each child.
Coming Soon

Please keep an eye on your in-box for the following communications:

- Ash Wednesday – March 2nd
- End of Trimester 2 – March 4th
- Report cards – March 14th
- Easter Basket Collection
- Spring Homeroom Picture Day – Monday, March 7th
- SJB Talent Show – Auditions February 24th