



Seek the Lord

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Gathered with His disciples around a table the evening before He would lay down His life for our salvation, Jesus said to Thomas, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6). Each December we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, both Son of God and Son of Man. God became one of us to teach us who He created us to be and to show us how to restore our relationship with Him, with each other and even with the world around us. Before sin, these relationships existed in perfect harmony, but since the Fall we live in a wounded world in need of redemption. Jesus has come to show us the way back to the Father, and that is a journey we cannot complete alone.

Jesus left us the gift of His Church so that we can work together for the salvation of all. God has entrusted to each of us gifts and talents that He intends us to use for the common good and not just keep to ourselves. Even before our birth, God infused each person’s soul with particular gifts and talents. Over time, as these gifts mature, we learn how to use them most effectively so that they may eventually yield the fruits which God intended all along. This is a process in which each of us as individuals plays an important role. It is also the goal of education, especially Catholic education which seeks to form the whole person after the model of Jesus Christ.

During his 2008 pastoral visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI addressed a group of educators about this fundamental aspect of education. He said, “Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost, every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in

Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and His teaching. In this way those who meet Him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord’s disciples, the Church” (Address at The Catholic University of America, April 17, 2008).

The mission, then, of our Catholic Schools is to provide a space where each individual can encounter the Lord and, through this encounter, learn who the Lord created him or her to be. It is a place where the desires and aspirations of one’s heart, placed there first by God Himself, are drawn out from each person and shaped and nurtured according to the truths of God’s created order. This formative experience is of life-long benefit for the tens of thousands of young people enrolled as students in the Catholic schools throughout our archdiocese. It is also a benefit for the greater community in which we live. The young people we form as disciples of Jesus will one day go out and make their contribution to society—in whatever vocational and career path they discover God has prepared for them.

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week at the end of this month, it is fitting to take a moment to thank all those engaged in this endeavor: parents, teachers, administrators, staff, countless volunteers and, of course, our students. Together we are accomplishing a great work with the Lord! May He who has begun this good work bring it to fulfillment (cf. Phil.1:6).