

'Exceeding Expectations' is music to super's ears

Dear Friends of Catholic Schools,

On Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, I was reading the Meditation of the Day in the Magnificat when a phrase seemed to jump off the page. "...Quick to take umbrage, slow to forgive..." is found not quite halfway through a poem by Brother Jacopone Da Todi, an Italian Franciscan who died in 1306. Though Brother wrote his poem centuries ago, it resonates in today's world. Whether it is in social media, talk radio, letters to the editor, or television, it often seems to me that we, as a society, are very "quick to take umbrage." This being an election year is not helping this phenomenon!

However, not long after I read that phrase in the Magnificat, I was given a copy of a letter written by a parent of a child in one of our Catholic schools. Quite a difference from, "Quick to take umbrage," this nearly 2 page letter that described the family's gratitude for the fact that their child was able to attend Catholic school.

The letter began by the writer explaining that she and her husband both had been products of Catholic schools, but that their financial situation had led them to enroll their child in public school. At some point, their son began to ask to attend the local Catholic school. With the assistance of the pastor, the child entered the Catholic school, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The mother referred to "being welcomed with open arms" and being introduced as a "new family" to the other school families. She described how the teachers shared her tears when learning of her son's special needs and reassured her that his learning would progress. She commented that the principal, faculty and staff "are exceeding my experiences and expectations of what educators should do." She closed by saying that her son is doing well and that she and her husband are "so pleased to see him so happy and improving each day."

When I finished reading that letter I must have had a smile a mile wide on my face - I know there was a tear in my eye. I know that we have parents in every one of our 43 Catholic schools who feel the same way about their experiences, but it always is such a joy to have this confirmed, especially in writing. I am thankful that this parent took the time to convey her experiences. However, I think I am more thankful that this parent sees the goodness surrounding her and is clearly teaching her child to see goodness, as well. Rather than taking "umbrage," this mom is sharing love and joy.

¡Vaya con Dios!