

Our rubric for success is our student's closeness with God

Dear friends of Catholic schools,

It has been several years since I stopped reading the Kansas City newspaper.

I realized that I was starting my days angry and frustrated about editorials with which I did not agree and desiring things I really did not need from all the advertising.

Because I now had more time in the morning, I began to add to the spiritual reading I had started. I should not have been surprised (but I was anyway) that my days began to have a peacefulness about them, and I did not seem to miss much — or maybe I was just blissfully ignorant of what I was missing!

Now I read the Scripture for daily Mass and reflections from a variety of sources. Recently, I have added another volume to my daily meditation: "5 Minutes with Christ — Spiritual Nourishment for Busy Teachers," edited by Father Lou DeFra, CSC, and Ann Primus Berends.

"5 Minutes with Christ" is a collection of short meditations by Catholic school educators and was compiled to "provide spiritual nourishment for any teacher trying to connect with Christ in the busyness of the school day."

I typically read one or two of the reflections each morning, and I have found so many of them to be profoundly eloquent and touching.

The other day this quote jumped out at me: "As teacher, Christ gives us a new rubric for measuring success. Christian educators are charged with doing the same. We help our students develop the skills that the world demands, but we instill in them a desire to use that education in ways that the world often derides. Though we give them the tools to earn power and wealth, we teach them to be with and to serve the weak and the poor. Though we give them tools to outperform their competition, we teach them to prize the others' success above their own. Though we give them the tools to be leaders, we teach them to be servants. We remember that for Christ, the skills are important, but it's the criteria on the rubric that make all the difference."

This passage beautifully summarizes what we are about in our Catholic schools in the archdiocese. It also explains why the research shows that graduates of Catholic schools are more actively involved in their parishes and communities than their public school counterparts.

However, we are not particularly interested in outperforming for its own sake. Rather, our rubric for success is our students' closeness to Christ. This may be difficult to measure, but we must always strive for it, nonetheless.

As it says in Scripture: "For God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

¡Vaya con Dios!