

School year opens with new faces, time-honored mission

Dear Friends of Catholic Schools,

As we left the music classroom, I heard the second graders remind their teacher, “Don’t forget our prayer! We have to pray!”

At a meeting of new Catholic school leaders, approximately 7 of whom came to us from public schools, I listened as they shared what drew them to our schools. To a person, each one described feeling called to serve in a setting in which they could share their faith and be a part of fostering the faith lives of their students. They came to our schools, not because they were dissatisfied elsewhere, but because they felt called to be a part of something greater.

An email arrived that contained the enrollment figures for each of the 3 Catholic high schools in Johnson County. These figures reflect a 5% increase, due primarily to students enrolling who have not attended Catholic schools in the past.

A principal relayed that parents arrived for a meeting with school staff bearing a basket of small tokens of appreciation for the effort the staff was making to ensure their child with special needs is successful.

Another principal forwarded an email received from a teacher who expressed her appreciation for the joyful spirit in the school as evidenced by not only the all-school Mass but also the daily interactions in the hallways and classrooms.

An entire class of very diverse 6th graders beamed from ear to ear as they explained all the things they love about their school.

Several dads who were volunteering at their school commented, “God bless our teachers! We are in awe of what they do every day for our kids.”

Middle school students intently listened and spoke in a language other than English, taught by a native speaker of that language. The principal shared that the class was one of 36 electives offered in the elementary school.

A new to us high school leader conveyed his pleasant surprise that a student walked up to him with a smile, extended his hand, introduced himself, and said, “Welcome to our school! Thanks for being here.”

What I have described above are just a few of the “good news” stories in our Catholic schools as we begin the 2016-2017 school year. We began this year, and will do so for years to come, with this simple foundational belief – “Each child is a masterpiece of God, created with precision for a specific purpose.” All of our efforts are focused on helping our students and their parents discern what each child’s God-given purpose is in this life on earth. Please pray for all those in our Catholic school communities that we fulfill this responsibility with fidelity and joy.

¡Vaya con Dios!