

Year of Mercy offers chance for reflection, celebration

Dear Friends of Catholic Schools,

Even though it is the beginning of a new school year, I find myself thinking about my mother. Part of the reason for this is my mom's health, but another reason has to do with the upcoming synod on the Family and the Jubilee Year of Mercy, both of which will be celebrated in Catholic schools throughout the diocese.

My mom turned 89 this past August. Until June, she still lived independently, even driving herself to her ever important weekly beauty shop appointment. In June, she began to experience a series of health challenges, which have caused me to reflect on my mom's life, the home life she provided to us, and how that influenced our schooling.

Mom worked for the first 2 years of my life while my father finished school. Then, when he died suddenly, she was left to raise 4 children between the ages of 6 and 18. She buried my father and sent me off to college 3 weeks later. Throughout it all, she retained her great outlook on life, her sense of humor, and her faith.

Though I would like to say that I was the perfect child and it was only my siblings who gave our mother "heartburn," I must admit that I, too, provided my share of angst. Yet, despite any disappointment or sadness we may have caused her, we always felt her deep and unconditional love for us.

One way that she showed her love was by expecting us to develop our talents and not allowing our father's death to serve as an excuse for lack of effort. She was not so much concerned with us failing as much as she was about us not trying, but she always told us how proud she was of us and how much she loved us even when she had to discipline us for our lack of effort (or anything else, for that matter).

I do not know if Pope Francis intentionally followed the world-wide focus on marriage and family with the Jubilee Year of Mercy, but it seems fitting. Where else but in the family do we first learn mercy?

I implore parents to be attentive to what their children are learning (by both word and deed) at home. Learning good life lessons at home will have a tremendous and positive impact on children's success in school!

Here's to another school year of growing!

! Vaya con Dios!