

ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Faith · Family · Education



Dear Parents,

As the end of the Advent season draws near and the start of the Christmas season is rapidly approaching, I would like us all to take some time to reflect on the abundant gifts we have; especially as a St. Andrew Parish community. For me, these gifts continue to be our growing and vibrant school, the academic excellence it provides and love that shared daily between our students and staff. As your Pastor, it is a great privilege for me to serve you and be such a wonderful community.

Last month I informed you that our School Advisory Council (S.A.C.) members, along with some staff members, were scheduled to participate in our first retreat, entitled *Getting to Greatness through Board Effectiveness and Servant Leadership*. The meeting was very informative and inspiring and as a result, I am happy to announce that through this experience and with the help of the Holy Spirit, that the S.A.C members were moved to create and implement a Vision Statement for our school. This Vision statement will be part of our B.E.S.T. Plan, and will act as a high-level reminder of our overall mission. The Vision Statement is simple and is in line with the mission of the entire Church, and is also what our patron saint, St. Andrew the Apostle, is noted for in the Gospel of John 1, 41 "*Then he (St. Andrew) brought his brother, Simon to Jesus*". Our Vision Statement is, "*At St. Andrew the Apostle Parish School we are called to **introduce the world to its Savior!***" This statement, coupled with our Success Criteria, Mission and Value Statement, while being supported by our Goals, provides us with very clear direction about how to continue to grow our school/parish as part of the overall Church's mission, which is *to introduce the world to its Savior*. As a reminder our Value Statement is:

We believe quality Catholic education calls us to integrate Gospel teachings and values with everyday life; while believing that all secular subjects need to be taught in the light of these values. These values are deeply rooted in the belief that Jesus Christ is the reason for our school and our community lives out our faith expressing the virtues of prudence, fortitude, charity, generosity, temperance, humility, and brotherly love. All, in communion with a strong sense of hospitality and belonging in everything we do.

This month we will be focusing on the virtue of Generosity, which is a Capital Virtue. It overcomes the sin of greed. This virtue can involve donating money, or giving up our free time and talents for the less fortunate, or even giving our possessions away. It is an excellent way to detach ourselves from the things of this world, which is exactly what Jesus told the rich young man who asked him what else he must do to gain eternal life over and above keeping the 10 Commandments. Generosity is NOT philanthropy out of our surplus wealth or government welfare programs. Generosity involves our personal sacrifice, and it is indeed sacrificial to our way of life. Remember the widow in the Bible who gave her two pennies in the synagogue, and Jesus said that she gave more than the rest, who, even though they gave a larger amount, gave out of their surplus wealth.

As we approach the Christmas Holiday season, I ask that you reflect on, pray for, and demonstrate the virtue of Generosity throughout your daily lives this month. Christmas is a perfect time for us as a parish family, to collectively educate our children about the virtue of Generosity; while *introducing the world to its Savior* through word and deed. I am so thankful for your ongoing commitment to our Value Statement through living out the virtues. I am also thankful for your ongoing generosity and prayers. Please remember that I will always keep you in my prayers. I would also ask that you continue to pray and reflect as to how God may be calling you to support our school with the gifts He has so *generously* bestowed onto you!

Thank you so very much and God be with you and your family – Merry Christmas!

In the loving Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Fr. Gregor

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