

January 28, 2018: Catholic Schools Week

Dear Parishioners,

This coming week is Catholic Schools Week. It is a time that we as parish can celebrate the fact we have a Catholic school at Holy Rosary and remind ourselves of the origin and mission of Catholic schools. The origin of the Catholic schools in the US came in the mid-19th century with the large influx of Catholic immigrants into this country. There was some anti-Catholic backlash with the arrival of these Catholic immigrants. There was concern on the part of the US bishops that the faith of these Catholic families be supported in a predominantly Protestant and somewhat anti-Catholic culture. Parishes were encouraged to found schools. By 1900, an estimated 3,500 parochial schools existed in the United States. Within 20 years, the number of elementary schools had reached 6,551, enrolling 1,759,673 pupils taught by 41,581 teachers.

In the 21st century the challenges we face as a Catholic community are different than those of the 19th century. Over the past 50 years we have seen a substantial drop in church participation, and the Northwest continues to be the least churching region in the US. An added challenge is how to keep Catholic schools financially viable with the high cost of education. Many Catholic schools across the country have had to close over the years and some are just hanging on. Catholic education over the past 50 years has been struggling to find its mission or identity in an increasingly secular society.

I believe the mission of Catholic education today is not much different from the reasons why Catholic schools in the US were founded in the mid to late 19th century. The Catholic faith needs supporting in an environment that is often hostile to Catholic faith and teaching. Children are the future and life of the Church. This was recognized 150 years ago and still is today. The mission of Catholic education has to be consistent with the mission of the Church throughout the centuries: the profession of faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As St. Paul said, if we do not have faith in Jesus Christ raised from the dead our faith is in vain.

The value of Catholic education and the reason we put effort and resources into it is to expose children to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and support families who wish to raise their children in the faith. Holy Rosary is a fine and excellent Catholic school and we will continue to support this effort of Catholic education in Edmonds. We will endeavor to remain true to the origin and mission of Catholic education and do our best to keep Christ at the center of what we do.

At Holy Rosary Catholic School we are so blessed to have the fine leadership of Sue Venable as our Principal, and an excellent and dedicated faculty. As you know, our school is not supported by government money. Our school is supported by tuition and parish support. Our school auction is a coming up on Feb. 10th. This is the main school fundraiser of the year and an excellent way we can support our Catholic school. I thank the Holy Rosary community for their continued support of this very important ministry of our Parish.

In Christ,

Fr. Vincent