

August 30, 2009

This Saturday, I will celebrate Holy Mass for a large gathering of faculty, alumni, and friends of Andrean High School to celebrate Andrean's 50th anniversary. On September 14th, the actual date on which the doors of Andrean opened for the first time, I will celebrate Holy Mass with the current student body and faculty.

While the world has changed dramatically in the past 50 years, Andrean remains true to its mission: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Within its crest are engraved the words: "Christ, my Teacher." While times have changed, Andrean remains the place where students encounter the living God who, in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth. Andrean provides the atmosphere in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and thanksgiving and worship of God is cultivated.

This 50th anniversary is an occasion to thank God for the blessings Andrean has been and continues to be for our Church and those who have become a part of the Andrean family. It is also the occasion to remember with gratitude Bishop Grutka, whose vision made the school possible so early in the history of our diocese, parishioners and parents whose boundless generosity built the school, the Basilian Fathers and the Sisters of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, who have been a critical part of the school from the beginning, lay administrators, faculty, and staff, who have been the heart of Andrean deeply committed to its purpose, parents who make many sacrifices to provide this superb formation and education for their children, and students, who have contributed so much of themselves to keep the Andrean spirit alive and well.

Only with the combined efforts of all has Andrean remained faithful in strengthening Catholic identity, attracting talented, faith-filled educational leaders, ensured academic excellence and provided financial background to keep the tuition, albeit rising with the times, within reach of our families.

As I minister across the diocese, I find many of our church and community leaders who attribute their happiness and success to the formation and education they received at Andrean or at one of our other two Catholic high schools, Bishop Noll Institute or Marquette.

The more mature our alumni become, they generally appreciate all the more deeply that it has been and is Christ Himself who tells us what it means and what we must do in order to be fully human: “He Himself is both the Way and the Truth, and therefore the Life that all of us are seeking.”

Our students and alumni have learned from their loving and generous teachers that freedom requires discipline and that authentic love only comes from overcoming selfishness. Our students have come to know instinctively that without God, there can be no hope, and without hope, there can be no authentic human life.

Two years ago, the Mike Back Family donated a truly striking mosaic depicting Jesus ministering to His people. It is located above the door on the east side of the campus. This mosaic stands as a lasting testament to Andrean’s commitment to God and His Church as well as to uplift those who are a part of the Andrean family and those who visit the campus.

Andrean has always excelled in academics, human formation, and athletics. This past year, the Niner baseball team won state championship and the girls’ softball team was state runner-up. However, most important, Christ stands at the center of the school as the deepest source of truth and everlasting life. The

entire Andean community keeps their eyes fixed on Jesus in whom we find our identity as His followers and answers to the questions that are so much a part of the human condition, such as: How shall I live? What are the values that shall direct my life? What is the purpose of life?

Andean maintains as its deepest challenge communicating the person and the message of Christ, who testified: “For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth” (Jn 18:37).

Congratulations, Father Paul Quanz, faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni! Blessings as you enter the next 50 years. The world will continue to change, but you remain a beacon assuring future generations: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”