

# PRINCIPAL'S NOTES

Diocese of Wilmington—Catholic Schools Office

May 3, 2024

## ***Pause and Ponder***

***Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

*Our eighth and final Beatitude for study this school year reminds us that building the Kingdom of God will always face challenges in the world. Choosing to live a countercultural life is never the easy or comfortable path. So, how does one move forward in living this Beatitude?*

*While all the gifts received at Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation assist us each day, the eighth Beatitude calls us to ask the Holy Spirit to renew the gift of courage in our lives daily. This fourth of seven gifts of the Holy Spirit enables a person “to overcome difficulties or to endure pain and suffering with the strength and power infused by God.”*

*Courage manifests itself in our lives in our thoughts, in our words, in what we do, and in what we choose not to do. With family, with friends, with colleagues, and with strangers, actions and reactions require courage in establishing or extending righteousness in our immediate world and beyond.*

*This week, let us be more conscious of how we choose to respond or not to the situations that come our way. Pray to the Holy Spirit to enliven the gift of courage in us so that we may live as bearers of the Beatitudes.*

## ***Let Us Pray...***

- + for teachers and nurses honored this week for their commitment to students and service to schools*
- + for St. Peter Cathedral School welcoming a Middle States Association visiting team this week*
- + for mothers and those who care for others as a mother, may they imitate our Blessed Mother in their love and service*



## ***Weekly Calendar***

<b><i>Sunday, May 5</i></b>	<b><i>Sixth Sunday of Easter</i></b>
Monday, May 6	<b><i>Teacher Appreciation Week</i></b> CSO Staff Meeting, 9:00 am
Tuesday, May 7	<b><i>Saint Matthias</i></b> Initial Faith Formation (Southern Cohort), Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School, 4:00 pm
Wednesday, May 8	<b><i>Nurse Appreciation Day</i></b>
Thursday, May 9	Initial Faith Formation (Northern Cohort), St. Elizabeth School, 4:00 pm
<b><i>Sunday, May 12</i></b>	<b><i>Ascension of the Lord</i></b> <b><i>Mother's Day</i></b>

## ***Catholic Identity – Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost***

The Easter season continues for fifty days after the Resurrection of the Lord filled with glorious Scripture passages about Jesus appearances to his Apostles and disciples. The last two Sundays of the Easter season celebrate the Ascension of the Lord (May 12) and Pentecost (May 19). Both Sundays offer an important time for Catholic school educators to draw students into these liturgical occasions. As we look to the Ascension of the Lord, we are reminded of our universal call to spread the Gospel, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:16-20). At Pentecost, the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-11) tells of this miraculous event and recalls our own Confirmation when we were sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Scripture readings for both events provide prayer and reflection for our students. Don’t miss this evangelizing opportunity to read, discuss, and pray these Scriptures with students.

## ***Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK)***

Thank you for completing ARK 2024. Results will be informative at both the school and diocesan levels in assessing our current status with regard to knowledge and beliefs and practices in elementary schools and in determining a course for the next school year for both teachers and students. ARK topics in need of development for teachers should inform the required three hours of ongoing faith formation for 2024-2025. ARK topics in need of development for students should be integrated in the curriculum in teaching religion. We cannot expect to see growth in either knowledge or beliefs and practices for teachers or students unless we are intentional in using these results. ARK data should be one facet of professional development addressed during the week teachers begin the new school year.

## ***Renaissance***

The final assessment for Renaissance for 2023-2024 begins Monday, May 13, and concludes Friday, May 31. Results will provide an indication of student, grade, and school growth throughout the current year. Please be sure to encourage students to commit their focused effort in these assessments to see their personal growth.

The next three-year agreement (2024-2027) with Renaissance is complete, except for school interested in myON. Following the March Administrators’ Meeting at which administrators were invited to review the proposal, I am grateful to Kelly Lanza, Christ the Teacher Catholic School, and Dr. Mary Elizabeth Muir, Holy Angels School, who volunteered to serve on the review committee for this purpose.

Two additional instructional resources have been added to the proposal – Freckle ELA for and Lalilo, for students in Grades 3-8 and K-2, respectively. The addition of these products enhances the Renaissance suite, which, when utilized fully, along with Renaissance Focus Skills, will result in consistent student growth.

## ***Renaissance*** (continued)

Schools interesting in continuing or adding myOn to their Renaissance suite should contact Mike Hays ([mhays@Renaissance.com](mailto:mhays@Renaissance.com)) directly by **Friday, May 10**. A number of schools have used myOn over the years very successfully. If a collective of schools subscribe to myOn, a diocesan discount will be applied.

Renaissance invoices will follow the week of May 13. Please remember when looking at your school's cost for Renaissance products that they are for a three-year cycle (2024-2027). Although payment from your school to the Catholic Schools Office is due over 15 months, the cost is really a three-year fee. Renaissance fees will be due in July, October, January, and April in FY25 and in July in FY26. Hopefully, providing an additional payment in FY26 eases the financial burden of remitting full payment in one fiscal year. In order to obtain a significant discount from Renaissance, the diocese will assume the full cost of the invoice to allow schools to pay over time.

Professional development will be provided in the summer for administrators new to their roles with regard to Renaissance. Returning administrators will be welcome to join in this professional development. School-based or product-based professional development will also be offered during the summer for more specified inservice. Information about PD opportunities will be forwarded to school administrators.

## ***New Teacher Orientation Day***

Please be sure to distribute the letter included last week in *Principal's Notes* to **teachers new to the Diocese of Wilmington**, even if they have taught elsewhere prior to joining your school. New Teacher Orientation Day, **Wednesday, August 14**, is a requirement for all teachers hired to work in parish and diocesan Catholic schools in the diocese. Private Catholic schools are encouraged to have their teachers participate in this orientation day.

A number of important topics will be addressed throughout the orientation day including the role and responsibilities of a Catholic school teacher, requirements for fulfilling Initial Faith Formation, licensing and certification, and the diocesan mentoring program. Also, the day will provide conversation with colleagues and a good start to networking in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Wilmington.

## ***Lead with Conviction***

Thank you for your participation in the Administrators' Meeting this past Tuesday. Attached are the Lead with Conviction slides used by Dr. Melanie Palmisano in her presentation. Administrators interested in the book study program offered by Dr. Palmisano should notify Dr. De Angelo by **Friday, May 24**. More information (cost, times, etc.) will be provided. To date, six administrators have expressed interest.

## ***Pandemic Relief Funds – Maryland***

The Pandemic Relief for Nonpublic Schools ([PRNS Program](#)) is separate \$3.5 million for our schools to share in, with each applying school receiving a base award of \$7,500, plus a significant per pupil allocation once all schools have submitted their intent to participate survey, which is due **Friday, May 10**. Schools should have received communication about the PRNS Program.

The PRNS program will allow you to order technology that includes teacher and classroom technology not normally allowed in the State Nonpublic Textbook & Technology Program. You may also use this fund to order desk and chairs for your classrooms.

## ***National School Nurse Day – May 8***



School nurses in the Diocese of Wilmington have done amazing work again this year! They have worked with administrators, teachers, staff, coaches, and families in building a safe and healthy school environment. We thank and honor them, and in a special way, our Lead School Nurse, Chriss Zimmerman, for dedication to our Catholic schools.

## ***SAVE the DATE***

### ***Catholic Schools Advancement Seminar – June 20***

Information will be forthcoming about the Catholic Schools Advancement Seminar sponsored by the Development Office and Catholic Schools Office. The event will be held on **Thursday, June 20**, 8:30 am-3:30 pm, at Saint Mark's High School. Sheila McGirl, Diocesan Development Director, and staff have worked to plan a full program addressing various aspects of advancement and secured program presenters with knowledge and experience in their respective fields. The seminar is appropriate for all school leaders, teachers, board members, and volunteers who engage in advancing their schools.

## ***Newsela***

Newsela is a school's one-stop shop for high-interest and accessible content that builds cross-curricular literacy skills in the context of your core curricula. Currently, four schools in the diocese utilize Newsela: Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School, Mount Aviat Academy, and Nativity Preparatory School of Wilmington. More information about Newsela may be found on the attachment or by contacting one of the schools using the product.

## ***Congratulations!***

*Seventy seniors from each of the seven Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Wilmington were recognized by Bishop Koenig last week at the Saint Francis de Sales Awards Convocation. These students were acknowledged for faith development, scholarship, service, leadership, and citizenship. The awards ceremony was quite impressive as one heard about the accomplishments of these soon-to-be high school graduates.*

*Thank you to our Catholic high schools for assisting these students to grow through information, formation, and transformation into young men and women who are People of God and People for Others.*

## ***Vision for the Future***

Thank you to the 11 schools whose fundraising efforts through Joe Corbi's resulted in a \$2300 contribution to the Vision for the Future Fund for tuition assistance, in addition to each school earning funds for its own use.

Christ the Teacher Catholic School  
Saint Elizabeth School  
Holy Cross School  
Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School  
Saint Francis de Sales School  
Immaculate Heart of Mary School  
Saint Peter Cathedral School  
Saint Mary Magdalen School  
Saint Peter the Apostle  
Saint Anthony of Padua School  
Holy Angels School

TO HAVE COURAGE FOR WHATEVER COMES IN LIFE,  
EVERYTHING LIES IN THAT.

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA