

PRINCIPAL'S NOTES

Diocese of Wilmington—Catholic Schools Office

September 15, 2023

Pause and Ponder

***Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

Have you ever had the experience of truly wanting something that you knew would bring you great pleasure and satisfaction, only to receive it and find yourself disappointed? You may ask yourself, why does that happen?

There may be a number of reasons to offer as an answer to the question. Perhaps the perceived good of something is simply an illusion. Perhaps whatever you desire is not of God; in other words, it is not truth, beauty, or goodness. Perhaps you do not deserve what you desire. And so on...

Have you ever thought that what you sought so earnestly, desired so strongly, or believed so deeply did not come your way because the Lord asks you to fill the void created by what is missing with him? If all of what we want comes to us, where is there room for God?

We need to recognize the God-space in our lives – the vacuum left when we didn't receive what we expected. In this space in our lives there is room for God to speak, to act, to be. When we find ourselves in such a situation, we are "poor in spirit." It is then and there that we are "blessed" as the first Beatitude reminds us for that is where God is.

Let Us Pray...

- + for Christ the Teacher Catholic School celebrating a patronal day on Sunday, September 24 – Venerable Catherine McAuley
- + for benefactors who support the Share in the Spirit Collection making Catholic school education available for families who desire it for their children

Calendar Dates

Sunday, Sep 17

***Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Catechetical Sunday
Constitution Day***

Monday, Sep 18

CSO Staff Meeting, 9:00 am
Y2 Mentoring Meeting, 3:45 pm, virtual
Y3 Mentoring Meeting DE, 4:00 pm, St. Anthony of Padua School

Wednesday, Sep 20

*Ss. Andrew Kim Tae-gon and Paul Chong Ha-sang, and Companions
CYM Golf Outing*

Thursday, Sep 21

*St. Matthew
New Castle County Title I Consortium Meeting, 9:00 am, virtual
Y3 Mentoring Meeting MD, 3:45 pm, Saints Peter & Paul Elementary School*

Sunday, Sep 24

***Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Share in the Spirit Collection***

Catholic Identity – Month of the Holy Rosary

As we look ahead to October, you may wish to plan for the ways your school will acknowledge this Marian Month. In this month, we honor Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary. According to tradition, the rosary was given to Saint Dominic in an apparition by the Blessed Virgin Mary in the year 1214. Over the centuries the rosary has undergone some changes to evolve into its current form with four sets of mysteries – Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous – and the prayers we use – Apostles' Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Hail Holy Queen.

How will your school provide information and formation about the Blessed Mother and the rosary appropriately during October? Planning ahead and communicating with teachers and parents is a way to demonstrate your role of spiritual leadership in your school.

Important Information

First Day Count

Attached to this email is the First Day Count, as reported by each school. For 2023-2024, the opening school enrollment is 109 students above last school year's enrollment! Congratulations to all schools for their diligent work on recruitment.

The Official School Enrollment is due **Friday, September 29**. This count will be used for all reports about the 2023-2024 school year.

Goals 2023-2024

Catholic Schools Office goals may be found at

CSO Annual Goals 2023-2024

Should you have any questions about the goals, please contact Dr. De Angelo.

Principals are reminded that their goals should be submitted to their primary superintendent (Dr. De Angelo or Miss Ripken) no later than Friday, September 29. A conversation to discuss the goals will be scheduled by the primary superintendent with the principal. The template for Principal's Goals may be found at

Principal Annual Goal Planning Document



CIA (Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment) Update

Homework: Why? What? How?

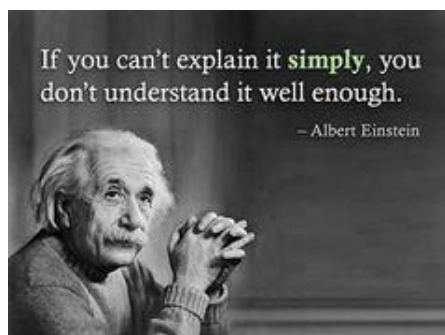
The start of the new school year brings with it an opportunity to set in motion classroom policies that will bear good results throughout the academic year. One concern among teachers from kindergarten through college is homework. Faculty meeting agendas, school handbooks, lunchroom discussions, and parent conferences all have homework in the mix.

Homework basically serves two purposes. It is either reinforcement of an understanding that has been developed through guided practice in the classroom or it is preparation for learning to occur. Diocesan School Policies 2007 (#6095) defines homework as “meaningful assignments to reinforce material taught or to provide background on material to be taught.” In other words, there should be a purpose or value in the assignment. Look at the next homework assignment you plan to give. **Can you succinctly state its purpose? Does it make sense? Is it necessary?**

The policy goes further to state homework assignments “should be within the limit of expected probability for accomplishment by the student.” Here’s the second homework hurdle. **Are the directions clear? Is the assignment doable without any assistance?**

A third understanding also flows from the policy. Homework for the sake of homework should not be given. In other words, **what will become of the assignment the next day? Will it be used as a formative measure to assess understanding at the start of class? Will it be collected and reviewed by the teacher so students receive immediate feedback?** Hopefully, it won’t simply become an exercise that is checked off as complete or incomplete!

Most students, like most teachers, come to school each day to be successful. They seek to do a good job and accomplish the day’s objectives. For whatever reason, some students lose their focus along the way. They may not recognize the learning target or appreciate the learning product. That’s why they’re students. They come to learn. That’s why we’re teachers. We have the responsibility to lead them. Before assigning tonight’s work, spend a few moments asking yourself some of the questions above. It may help to reframe the why, what, and how of homework for your students and for you.





Hispanic and Latino Americans make up almost 20 percent of Catholic school students and 10 percent of Catholic school teachers (NCEA, 2021). National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated every year from September 15 to October 15. Incorporating multicultural education into the Catholic classroom is an effort that proves fruitful not only for English Language Learners (EL), but for every student – because a classroom thrives when barriers are removed.

If your school plans any special recognition in worship, instruction, or celebration, please be sure to inform the Catholic Schools Office and *The Dialog*.

Diocesan Professional Mentoring Program

The diocesan mentoring program begins next week.

Monday, September 18

- Year 2 mentees and mentors will meet virtually at 3:45 pm. Dr. De Angelo has sent mentees and mentors the link for this meeting.
- Year 3 mentees and mentors in the Wilmington area will meet in-person with Miss Ripken at 4:00 pm at St. Anthony of Padua School. Mentees and mentors will receive their books and other materials at the meeting.

Thursday, September 21

- Year 3 mentees and mentors in Maryland will meet in-person with Miss Ripken at 3:45 pm at Saints Peter and Paul Elementary School. Mentees and mentors will receive their books and other materials at the meeting.

Monday, September 25

- Year 1 mentees and mentors (PreK-Grade 5) will meet virtually at 3:45 pm with Dr. De Angelo.

Tuesday, September 26

- Year 1 mentees and mentors (Grades 6-12) will meet virtually at 3:45 pm with Dr. De Angelo.

Monday, October 2

- Year 4 mentees and mentors will meet in-person with Miss Ripken at 3:45 pm at St. Elizabeth School.

Year 1 and Year 4 mentees and mentors will receive an email from Dr. De Angelo or Carol Ripken, respectively, regarding their upcoming meetings.

Professional Development Day Planning Committee

Each year a committee of administrators and faculty/staff has helped the Catholic Schools Office to plan and execute the March diocesan Professional Development (PD) Day. Once again, Carol Ripken, who will serve as the committee facilitator, is asking for volunteers who would be willing to meet monthly, October through March, and help with the many details that go into planning a valuable PD experience that will benefit all Pre-K to Grade 12 educators throughout the diocese. This year AI and social media are strong possibilities as areas of focus. Please consider joining this committee and inviting faculty/staff members who are interested in serving; technology coordinators would certainly be an asset to the committee. Principals, please email Carol Ripken at cripken@cdow.org with the names of anyone from your school interested in volunteering.

Principal Evaluation Committee

Veteran administrators are aware that the current principal evaluation process was developed by a group of principals in 2017-2018 and implemented during the 2018-2019 school year. It's now time for a thorough review and revision of the professional standards for principals, the principal evaluation process, and all accompanying surveys and documents. Administrators (presidents, principals, assistant principals) interested in serving on the committee are asked to email Carol Ripken at cripken@cdow.org.

NCEA Databank Summary Report – Due October 5

On Monday, September 18, each school will receive information regarding the annual NCEA Databank Summary Report. This information is important to NCEA and to the Diocese of Wilmington in many ways. It provides the NCEA national report on Catholic schools and it provides the demographic information for the Diocese of Wilmington. It also establishes our place among the 195 dioceses with schools in the United States.

All numbers should be the actual count as of **September 10**. Schools are asked to complete the report by **Friday, October 5**. If you have any concerns, please contact Amanda McLain at the Catholic Schools Office.

Vision for the Future 2024-2025 Applications

Applications for tuition assistance (Vision for the Future) for the 2024-2025 school year through the FACTS site opened today, **September 15, 2023**. The deadline for applications is **January 31, 2024**, and notification of awards will begin on **March 1, 2024**.

From The Dialog...

We continue to solicit nominations for our Teacher Feature, with students eligible to nominate a teacher to be profiled in *The Dialog*. These have proven to be very popular and are a great way to recognize teachers who inspired your students. We will need a name of any student who submits a name, along with their nomination so we can quote it in the article. As for the teachers, we will need 20-30 minutes of their time and will be taking a photo. This is a great opportunity for you to promote your schools and your teachers. We will also accept nominations from 7th through 12th grade students at elementary and high schools.

New to the high school scene this year, but not to *The Dialog*, is "One of Us," our podcast featuring people in and around the diocese. We are looking for high school students for whom their faith is an important part of their lives. This is about people who support their parish or school. We would need to record an interview with this student, either in person or over the phone, and we will need to take photos of them as well (or you can provide one). There's a script that we follow and which we can get to you. We ask where they grew up, what parish they attend, the most important part of their spirituality, what keeps their connection to the church going, what they would change in their life as a Catholic if they could, what they would tell someone who asks them why they should be Catholic, and what their faith means to them.

Send Teacher Feature or One of Us nominees to Mike Lang at mlang@thedialog.org or Joe Owens at jowens@thedialog.org.



September 23-24, 2023

**ONCE WE THINK WE ARE RICH, WE CAN BECOME SO
SELSATISFIED THAT WE LEAVE NO ROOM FOR GOD'S
WORD, FOR THE LOVE OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
OR FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
THINGS IN LIFE.**

POPE FRANCIS