

My brothers and sisters, I am delighted to be with you this morning as you gather to look to the future of St. Anthony's High School. The sacrifice of your time and the giving of your experience and talents speaks to the dedication and love that you have for Catholic Education, and specifically for the success of St. Anthony's.

Whenever we look at planning, and specifically at strategic planning, we are often consumed with numbers. We want measurable outcomes. We want detailed time-lines. We want specific performance points at specific times. These things are important, and we must be attentive to these sorts of details. However, the first thing in any strategic plan must be the vision! What is the vision? Where are we going and how do we propose to get there?

Today's readings speak to us about God's vision, first for the people of Israel, and then for the whole world! God's vision is for a people who love the Lord, their God, with all their hearts, all their minds, and all their souls, and who, in turn, love their neighbors as themselves, as Jesus tells us in the gospel reading. This requires putting away the false idols of power, narrow self-reliance, or short-sighted dependence on the people we think are our friends, as the prophet Hosea makes clear. The vision is the vision of God's love. The pathway is the way of humility and service.

St. Anthony's has a storied history as one of the great Catholic High Schools of San Antonio. Serving as a minor seminary for many years, and now as a part of the family of schools with Incarnate Word. But mere reliance on the past will not move us forward. We must ask, what is our

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purpose? If our purpose is merely to have an elite school that will be the object of desire for wealthy families, then we have failed before we have begun. If we are merely a pipeline to the University, good though that may be, we have again failed before we have begun. But, if we decide that the future of this school community is to form and educate disciples of Jesus who help the world to love God and neighbor, we will succeed beyond our wildest dreams!

I know that you must look at numbers. I know that you must establish levels of measurable performance. I know that you must have timelines and business plans and all the rest. As you do these things, keep before your eyes God's master plan! A world that loves God and neighbor! If that is constantly before you, you will have the Lord's blessings! Amen.