

## Catholic Schools Celebration / Teacher of the Year

I am so grateful for this opportunity to be with you this evening! There is so much energy and joy in this room! Is the school year about to finish? Y'all are so happy!

Tonight we celebrate! We do so because we have amazing people! Amazing people who have given of themselves with love and joy, and who have made great sacrifices for the success and growth of our young people. And we have such a great history to celebrate together, from schools that have been around for a long time — like Central Catholic downtown San Antonio, to Our Lady of Grace school that is so new out in Pleasanton! This means that we have both a great tradition, and a great future! Catholic Schools are alive!

But I am particularly moved by the great sacrifices of our teachers and principals, of our pastors and parents, who keep the hope of Catholic education alive through their commitment and hard work. And this is the core of our reason for coming together tonight! We are here to honor the people who make a difference! To celebrate the women and men who work directly with our children in the classroom, on the playground, and at the field or gymnasium to make their lives better.

Our teachers are the ones who not only impart knowledge to our kids, but also inspire confidence within them, celebrate our kids' successes, dry their tears on a rough day, and who give them a sense of their future and

potential. That is pretty awesome! After the responsibilities of being a mom or dad, being a teacher is the most important role in the life of a child.

Now, we add something even deeper to this. Faith! In Catholic Schools we not only share knowledge and teach our children to think, even more, we share with them the beauty and mystery of our faith! And we do this by worshiping and praying with them, teaching the fundamentals of our faith to them, and by living the meaning of our faith as examples for their lives. Sharing the faith is a part of the Apostolic ministry of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ! We say, every time we recite the Creed, that the Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic! To be Apostolic means to share the faith the Apostles imparted to us, and to do it with the enthusiasm and wisdom that has come to us from our Sacred Tradition.

I want you to remember that we do not do this alone! We are aided and supported by the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit inspires us so often in what we need to say, or in what we need to do. My dear teachers and principals, don't hold back from praying to the Holy Spirit for your needs! The Holy Spirit is the gift sent by the Father and the Son for our benefit! The Holy Spirit leads us to all truth. The Holy Spirit is the source of all wisdom and true knowledge for us.

That is why I love to invite people to pray: Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven! Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven! Ven Holy Spirit, Ven! May God bless you and fill you with His love!