

**Homily – Catholic Schools Convocation Mass –August 10, 2021  
St. Mark the Evangelist Church – Feast of Saint Lawrence**

*“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.”* (Mt 11:25-26). As teachers, many of you are privileged to be able to contemplate this mystery for which Jesus thanks the Father: the simplicity of pure hearts, with an uncomplicated faith. Their relationship with God is as transparent as their connection to earthly reality.

As we grow older, we struggle to face everyday issues with a supernatural vision. Saint Paul, in the first reading, is trying to help the Corinthians achieve just that, while at the same time he is trying to help the Church in Jerusalem improve its economic situation. He says that “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

That cheerfulness, which deserves God’s love, is contagious. You receive it from your students and you give it back to them. Who is the poor one in that case? We are all poor and we are all rich because we all need one another, and all of us can serve someone, even little children. That is God’s will for us and it is an image of God’s own inner relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The “grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies.” But then it produces more wheat. You dedicate your lives to the service of those who are poor in knowledge. That dedication more often than not requires sacrifice, but it pays off. As you grow older, through your loving service the fruits of the Holy Spirit also grow in you. Like St. Paul says: “God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need,

**you may have an abundance for every good work.” (2 Cor). He “will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.”**

**Therefore, He has every right to raise the bar constantly. The Lord demands that you have hearts as pure as those of small children, while you boldly face the very real challenges that confront Catholic education in our Archdiocese today. He calls you to promote his plan “that is to be received by faith,” teaching with “love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith” (1Tim 1:4-5), hence becoming teachers of God’s law.**

**You are called to deal with the very concrete challenges of your job with the spirit exemplified by St. Lawrence. During a persecution, he was required to present the wealth of the Church to Roman authorities. Instead of giving them the alms that he managed, he distributed the money among the poor and presented them as the wealth of the Church. A significant portion of the wealth of the Church is under your care in Catholic schools.**

**In the gospel, Jesus talks about hating our own lives. That means a discomfort for comfort. It is a challenge for you to constantly move away from comfort zones and test the limits of your natural gifts, experiencing your supernatural relationship with God with transparency, as you connect to earthly reality with innovative courage. Pope Francis has called teachers in Catholic schools to work “with a bold and innovative fidelity able to bring together the Catholic identity to meet the different ‘souls’ existing in a multicultural society.” That tension keeps you tuned, like a violin cord, enabling you to be spiritual leaders that play the music of the Holy Spirit to the future leaders of families, society and the Church.**

**May Our Lady of Guadalupe intercede for you, your families and your students, for our Catholic schools community to experience the comfort of her care.**