

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2022



On one of the particularly frigid days in early January, with indoor recess, I encountered a small group of First Graders playing cards. They invited me to join and handed me some “Go Fish” cards. When I inquired about a few of the rules retrieved from the depths of my memory bank, one of the girls informed me forthrightly that “your idea of how to play this game is really old-fashioned.” I chuckled and went along with any variation they wanted to play, flexing with the whim of how the rules seemed to change a bit with each turn taken. Surely no one version of the rules was “mission critical” to the desired outcome of matching the fish.

This experience stuck with me, and comes back to mind today as we prepare to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, because there definitely *are* guiding principles and convictions which are “mission critical” for the endeavor of Catholic schooling. Rooted, as we are, in the gospel of Jesus Christ – his ways of living, ways of believing, ways of loving and ways of serving – we have the rich legacy of a pathway that is timeless. Infusing all of our striving towards excellent educational outcomes is the pastoral priority embedded in the pattern of the Faithful Shepherd – to “pasture” in a manner so that each may be found and all may be fed.

At the essence, then, of our parish Catholic School, is the mission to form disciples – followers of this way of Jesus Christ – and to equip them to transform the world around them. At Faithful Shepherd, we do this as a direct extension of the mission of this parish, and always as partners in the mission of each family. Because our Catholic Christian faith is about giving the gospel a life in the here and now, it is never “old-fashioned.” The essential focus for those of us living our discipleship in 2022, therefore, is the challenge to establish the “means and the methods for the mission” in ways that are ever new – and to continue to re-invent and to re-invest in Catholic schooling in a contemporary style which equips each new generation to respond to the call to holiness in this day, and to express the reign of God in this place.

Maybe we could say that Jesus played “Go Fish” as he invited and formed disciples – and the rules were pretty straightforward: “Love one another as I have loved you.” In the Catholic School environment, we provide an eco-system, if you will, in which the school of fish learns to ever more completely “match” the pattern of gospel living into which we have been immersed. Come and See!

Peace, in the Shepherd’s care,

Catherine Butel
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