

August 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to a new school year at Blessed Sacrament. For 92 years our parish has sponsored a parochial school in order to assist parents in their role of teaching their children. Our goal is to give each child the knowledge, skills, and values to live productive lives pleasing to God. This past year our school spent \$5,200 per student. That means that for every student who paid \$3,900 in tuition, our parishioners subsidized the actual cost to the tune of \$1,300. We are happy to do that because we believe a quality education is important and at Blessed Sacrament that quality is based on the following:

- Catholic-value education. The children are taught the same values Jesus taught, not just in religion class but in the application of all subjects.
- Academic excellence. Our goal is to challenge each student to do their best. You will find our students achieve well above the national average.
- Positive learning environment. This is about more than just being safe. It is about encouraging children to learn and teaching them mutual respect and accepting responsibility for their actions.

To maintain this quality, we need your help. First and foremost we need you to live your faith. I ask you to make a promise to attend Mass (or Sunday services for those who are not Catholic) each weekend. We teach that as a requirement of our faith and yet, many fail to do so. Too often we let travel, sports, other activities, etc. override the obligation to worship God. In doing so the values your child is learning are undermined. God must always come first. Please make that a commitment in your home.

Secondly, be involved in your child's education and faith. Don't just review their homework, but take time to talk with them about what they are learning in class, what they are reading, and what they have learned in their relationships with others. Make sure your advice to them is in line with what Jesus might say. Talk to them about God. Teach them to pray and don't be afraid to pray with them. "The family that prays together, stays together."

Thirdly, fulfill your obligations and commitments. Service hours at school are part of that commitment. We want you to be part of the school community and working with others from the school is a good way to get to know each other and build this community. Your help also saves the school thousands of dollars and I am certainly grateful for that.

As many of you know, I will be on sabbatical for part of the school year. From mid-September until mid-March I will be living and working with the Jesuit Refugee Services at Kakuma, Kenya. Father Scott Thelander S.J.C. will be assigned as temporary administrator to carry out the pastoral needs of the parish and the school until I return. I ask your cooperation. I also ask your prayers for me, those in the camp where I will live, as well as all refugees. I hope to be able to keep you and the school updated on my journey through pictures and e-mails.

In the five years I have served as pastor here at Blessed Sacrament, I have found wonderful parents and a strong school community who want to do right by their children and by God. As we begin this new school year, I ask that you help us to continue to build this school to be a strong, Catholic, educational community where our children will grow in knowledge and skills and all our families will be nourished in their faith. If we work together, I have no doubt this will indeed happen.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jeff Grant