

Educating in the Light of Faith

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity, Stewardship

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. As we begin this day of reflection on our vocation as teachers in Catholic schools, it is only fitting that we begin with prayer.

OPENING SONG

Please join in our opening song, *Children of the Light*

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin our prayer: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray. Lord, you call us to shine with the light of your Son's Gospel by educating in the light of your gift of faith. We ask you to open our hearts and minds to the beauty and truth you call us to bring to the lives of those we serve. We make this prayer to you through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Let us be attentive to God's word:

READING

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 5, 14-17)

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION

The Gospel of Jesus is an invitation to be truly free – to be who we are, the best we can be, to shine with the light and love of Christ. This is not always an easy task in contemporary Western society. Our lives and those of our students are constantly bombarded with rapidly changing images and messages that create a false culture of uncertainty – political uncertainty, economic uncertainty and even the uncertainty of peace. Yet, beneath it all, the certain message of the Gospel and its invitation to be free remain steadfast and unshaken.

The path to true freedom is not another course, another seminar or even another method ushered in by some 'expert' from another place. Our freedom is a relationship with the person of Jesus. No matter how much things change around us, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is our peace amid the changes, chaos and uncertainties that can swirl around us. His abiding presence offers the baptized a new way of seeing – with the eyes of faith, a new way of trusting – with the gift of hope, and a new way of being for one another – with hearts animated by his love.

We are the Gospel's message of light for our students' uncertain world, waterers of seeds planted at Baptism in the fertile ground of their hearts. Nothing grand is asked of us. Instead, we are invited to let Jesus carry our heaviest burdens and the weariness of our own hearts. We are invited to let him feed us with his Presence in his word and sacraments. He will provide a community to sustain us in worship, prayer and fellowship. His presence in our lives will take what is ordinary and make it shine, to lead those we serve to be all they were meant to be as God's children. And in the process, we will find ourselves truly free.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray for the Church. That all who are joined to Christ through Baptism might embrace their call to be light for the world. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear out prayer.*

Let us pray for the world. That all human hearts might look beyond the uncertainties of our world and embrace God's universal call to peace, love and unity. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear out prayer.*

Let us pray for those who suffer without hope or meaning, especially in our schools. That they might find in our witness reasons to believe in a God who cares. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear out prayer.*

Let us pray for ourselves, that the Holy Spirit might awaken in us an ever deepening commitment to living out our Baptismal call to follow Christ. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear out prayer.*

Let us pray for our presenters here today. That they might be inspired by the Holy Spirit with words to comfort and strengthen us in our journey of faith. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear out prayer.*

For all our intentions... We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear out prayer.*

Let us join our prayers, spoken aloud and those in the silence of our heart, to the constant prayer of Jesus before the Father on our behalf, using the words he gave us... ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, your love for us is unchanging and everlasting. Increase our trust in your abiding presence as we live out your call to educate in the light of the Catholic faith. May all that we do in our Catholic schools shine with the light of your Son's Gospel. We make this prayer to you in the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Please join in singing our closing song: (Sugg. *Shine, Jesus, Shine* by Graham Kendrick)

