

Labourers in a Wondrous Harvest

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Fortitude

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Discipleship, Reverence, Stewardship

As we begin this day of professional activity, let us take a moment to prayerfully reflect on our calling to educate in the light of faith, and to ask God's blessing on our time together.

OPENING PRAYER

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

Let us pray: Lord, we come before you as labourers in your harvest, asking you to open our minds and hearts to what you would have us understand this day. May today's gathering deepen our commitment to help students grow in knowledge and faith as disciples of Jesus, your Son. We make this prayer to you in his name. Amen.

Reading: (1 Pet 1, 3-12)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith -being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire- may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(Pause)

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

The Greek philosopher Socrates saw educators as midwives in the birthing of knowledge. He believed that knowledge in each student could be drawn out by skillful questions. His methods empowered students to continue learning about the wonders of themselves and of the world around them. Who among us has not shared in the excitement of a student's *aha! moment*, when eyes are opened to new possibilities for learning and growing? Who of us has not experienced this same wonder in our own lives, and sought to enkindle it in those around us?

As Catholic educators, we too can awaken young hearts and minds to new knowledge and skills. What makes us distinctive is that we do this in the wondrous light of our faith. The words of scripture and the believing community's teaching are our best guides in this task. In the above reading, St. Peter encouraged the first Christians by helping them recognize their wondrous heritage as members of the baptized. He gave them the perspective they needed to live as followers of Jesus in times of great struggle. As a first witness to Christ's death and resurrection, he reminded them of the wonders being accomplished in their lives, and in so doing helped restore joy and purpose to their labours.

As labourers in God's harvest, there is consolation for us in St. Peter's words. If the outcome of our work depended only on ourselves, we might feel overwhelmed by our responsibilities. We can take comfort in knowing that Christ patiently walks with us each day, sharing our burdens, helping us through one another's kindness, and empowering us with the gift of his Spirit. This same Spirit is constantly bringing the seeds of God's Reign within young hearts to fruition, according to God's mysterious design. What these seeds will yield, we do not know. As members of Christ's body, called to educate in the light of faith, we work as members of the believing community, knowing that ours is a privileged role in a young person's path of discipleship and knowledge that stretches from birth into eternal life.

Let us pause for a moment and gather in our hearts the needs of the Church, the world, those who suffer, those in our care, those in our families and communities.... And let us unite our prayers with the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father...*

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, you have called us as witnesses to your Son's Gospel through Catholic education. Grant that we may never cease to appreciate the marvelous deeds you continue to accomplish in our lives and through our works. May the Good News of Jesus your Son always be made visible in our labours. We make this prayer to You in His name. Amen.

And may Almighty God bless us, and bless our day: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.