

## Principal's Remarks for St. Mary Parish Meeting—September 22, 2011

Good evening and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of St. Mary School. The school has been a vital part of the ministry of St. Mary Parish for over 100 years and everyone associated with the school appreciates the faith and support of the parish.

We have as our theme this year "Blessed Are the Peacemakers." In a troubled world, we turn to Jesus and his teachings to help our students better understand that they can make a difference. We are studying famous people who worked or are working for a peaceful world. Each morning we will devote a few minutes of our Centering Time to discuss our roles as peacemakers. We are making origami cranes which are an international symbol of peace. We hope to have 5,000 by the end of the year.

Through the generosity of the Ted and Grace Bachhuber Foundation 4 more interactive whiteboards were added to the classrooms at St. Mary's over the summer. Now, each teacher can use this technology to better instruct the students. All computers are now networked to the Internet. We have hired a part time technology teacher to help the students learn how to incorporate these advances into their academic lives. We were also able to purchase a digital microscope which will greatly enhance our science program.

Approximately 1/3 of the money from the \$90,000.00 Bachhuber gift that we received last December was spent last year. A major expenditure was for new social studies books so the students have up-to-date materials.

The Community 4K program has been implemented this year. St. Mary's has a class of 16 students. The Mayville district will pay St. Mary's \$2,500.00 per student as well as provide support materials. The money will be used to pay the salary of our preschool teacher. We are hoping to increase our 3K numbers.

Preparation is taking place for the next accreditation visit which will take place in Fall, 2012. The Archdiocese requires that schools go through this process every 7 years. If anyone in the parish would like to serve on the Accreditation Leadership Committee, please contact the school office. There are many areas that the Accreditation Team will be reviewing and we are working diligently to insure that we receive high marks for each standard. A self-study document must be prepared and submitted by June 30, 2012.

The Archdiocese has designated a new Associate Superintendent for the schools in our district. Mr. Patrick Lofton will be visiting the school on October 13 and meeting with Fr. Tom and me. He is visiting all the schools under his supervision so that he can better help them provide the best Catholic education possible. Last year the Archdiocese also recommended that the school and parish join the local Chamber of Commerce. I filled out the paperwork last spring and St. Mary's parish, Christian Formation, and school information is now on the Chamber website. I have been attending Chamber "welcoming of new businesses" events. We are trying very hard to make the public aware of the school. Our students will also be participating in the Audubon Days parade.

The School Advisory Board was trained last year by the Archdiocese. The Cohort Training was very informative and the SAB hopes to use the information to help the school as it continues its mission of Catholic education in the Mayville area. Many of the SAB is returning this year so that this training can be more fully utilized.

I will leave you with the vision of Kathleen Cepelka, the Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. She is a strong advocate of Catholic education and I have been inspired and invigorated every time I hear her speak. I have spoken to her several times about St. Mary's and she has pledged the Archdiocese's help in all matters concerning the school. I will give you a copy of her vision for you to read at your leisure. She encourages all of us teaching in the Archdiocese to "teach as Jesus taught."

Thank you for your kind attention. God bless you.

Kris Ries, Principal

## “VISION 2011”

- We need outstanding **leaders** for our schools, leaders who are focused in their professionalism, imaginative in their thinking, courageous in their actions, and committed to integrating faith-based values into every aspect of school life.
- We need **quality programming** that urges and enables all students to maximize their growth academically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially.
- We need **teachers** who are on fire with love for their calling as Catholic school educators and who transform their classrooms and their schools with their faith, optimism, energy, and competence.
- We need **parents** who understand and appreciate the mission of Catholic education: the unique partnership of our schools with them, raising children in the way of holiness.
- We need Christian hospitality for students with **diverse backgrounds and abilities** and measurable actions to guarantee their success.
- We need **specialists** with varied areas of expertise who can address all aspects of students’ learning and who respect the challenges they face.
- We need **physical resources** appropriate for our populations and our programming: facilities, technologies, and infrastructures that support the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments.
- We need **financial assistance** in every form, but we especially need scholarship aid for current students and endowments large enough to provide for schools’ future sustainability.
- We need **parish and school communities** willing to proactively consider and plan for new models of Catholic education that will ensure its long-term accessibility, affordability, and viability.
- Finally, and most importantly, we need schools in which the **Gospel** is lived and in which all are recognized as Christians by their love for one another.

In some way, as I noted above, all of these key “challenges” have already been actualized into “blessings” in many areas of our Archdiocese and in schools both small and large. For that, let us give thanks and praise, even as we renew our efforts, looking ahead to 2011 – 2012, to make the vision that this brief reflection represents become an increasing reality.

As I wish each of you a beautiful, bountiful summer, I offer sincere thanks for the countless ways in which you’ve made this a year of growth, for me and for many, in faith, in hope, and in love.

Kathleen A. Cepelka, Ph.D.