

Dear Parents, Students, Faculty and Friends,

Welcome to Most Holy Trinity Catholic School! Whether you are a current member of the MHT school family, alum, parishioner, or a family interested in the breadth of the spiritually formative and academically challenging experience we offer, I want to welcome you to our very blessed community this new school year. It is in the very spirit of our namesake, as well as in the charism of our guiding order, the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, that we as a faith community, one united in the exercise of Gospel values, serve as echoes of God's mystery and the Divine Trinity in which he constructed this world.

I would like to begin this welcome in the words of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education's declaration, *Gravissimum Educationis*. It is here where members of the Second Vatican Council outline in poetic diction the crucial responsibility of the parent in their role as decision makers in the education of their children.

“As it is parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must therefore be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their education. The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute. It is therefore the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to God and their fellow-men which will promote an integrated, personal and social education for their children. The family is therefore the principal school of the social virtues which are necessary to every society. It is therefore, above all, in the Christian family...that children should be taught to know and worship God and to love their neighbor...” (3)

Thus it is through these words and in recognition of the primacy of the parents' role in the education of their children that I welcome you again, new and old, to the 2009-2010 school year at Most Holy Trinity Catholic School and affirm your prayerful decision and/or offer my prayerful support in your discernment in electing MHT as the privileged environment in which your child's Christian education is carried out. I thank you for both choosing and making this very special school an extension of your own family; a second home if you will...one in which there is no separation, no distinction, between time for formation and time for learning. MHT is a place that resonates with the spirit of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity in and through the relational experiences shared by us all. It is through our efforts to serve as active participants in the fulfillment of the central mission of the Church - that of evangelization - that we spread the Gospel message of love and compassion for the human spirit to those entrusted to our care and most treasured in our lives - our children. This is best done in the context of the Catholic school...this is best done at MHT.

In this atmosphere of the living Trinity I would now ask that you allow me the opportunity to formulate a statement of my personal mission to Catholic education in general and Most Holy Trinity Catholic School specifically. As a member of the Catholic Church and a faithful servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, I stand fully committed to Catholic education. As a leader and administrator in Catholic schools, responsible for the spiritual direction and growth of a community of believers, I now affirm my faithful pledge and steadfast conviction to such a vocation.

I believe that the Catholic school serves an integral purpose in the fulfillment of the greater mission of the universal Church. As stated in the Congregation for Catholic Education's, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, "the Catholic school participates

in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out.” (11) It functions as the unique vehicle by which the message of eternal salvation through Christ, as revealed in the Gospels, is transcended generationally and geographically. It has in its midst the daily manifestation of the Great Mysteries, revealed not just through our mere participation in life, but explicitly awakened in the fullness of our immersion in community, education, and prayer. With such immense responsibilities existing in such a position, and compounded by the authority to influence them and their levels of realization, I hereby commit myself in word and action to a threefold personal mission.

First, as a Catholic school leader I will continue to develop and enhance the Catholic identity of the school in which I serve. If the heart of a school is its spirituality, then “the Catholic school [is] at the heart of the Church.” (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 11) Understanding the significance of the school’s role in the mission of the Church and its perseverance in a growing secular world, I commit myself most intensely to the evangelization and communication of this message through the development and cultivation of the school’s Catholic identity. Secularization of the message, transitions in the value proposition and ignorance of official documents have resulted in obstructions that impede the inertia of a central mission of the Church- the Catholic school. It is my responsibility as a Catholic school leader to educate others explicitly and implicitly in the beauty and significance of the Catholic school’s role within the Church; that it does not emanate from the heart but resides integrally within it. Ultimately this aim should be experienced “from the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school...he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics.” (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 25)

Secondly, as a Catholic school leader I believe in the academic development and spiritual nourishment of my students; embracing the conviction of their inseparable nature as perfect compliments to both the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ himself- the true Incarnation. “Remembering that ‘the simultaneous development of man’s psychological and moral consciousness is demanded by Christ almost as a pre-condition for the reception of the befitting divine gifts of truth and grace’ (The Catholic School, 9) serves to support an educational approach founded on a curriculum whose aim “is not merely the attainment of knowledge but the acquisition of values and the discovery of [these] truths.” (The Catholic School, 39) In my role as a leader in Catholic schools, it is my responsibility not only to ensure that “the instruction given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that given in other schools” (Canon Law, 806.2) but that the final product be the result of an “educational activity, in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.” (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 11) Nurturing the heart of a school, its spirituality, restores the compressions that circulate life and preserves its existence. Too often are we drawn to the periphery. Too often do we attempt to heal the symptoms of a suffering body while neglecting to give care to what truly generates its life defining pulse. As the leader of my school, it is my paramount responsibility to cultivate and care for the spiritual nourishment of all those within my community, as well as my own, and to bring all closer into a union with the Great Mysteries of the Church, culminating in the living Eucharist.

And lastly, as Catholic school leader I believe the religious dimension of the school as expressed in our experiential relationships in community serve as echoes of the Holy Trinity. The construction of relationships is essential to the success of our schools. “The more the members of the educational community develop a real willingness to collaborate among

themselves, the more fruitful their work will be.” (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 39) Developing these relationships, between faculty, students, parents, clergy, religious, parishioners, community partners and benefactors, not only allows us the opportunity to pool resources and maximize potential outcomes, but even more so, engage more fully in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Leaders of schools must “be especially concerned with the creation of a community climate permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love, and they should bear witness to this in their own lives”. (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 38) As a Catholic school leader I am committed to building relationships that extend far beyond the self serving context in which we typically place them. They need to be viewed from the lens of instruments that reveal the community that resides among us- they are not created but rather unveiled.

In summation, I believe “the Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church” (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 34) and that the school’s identity, success in the integration of academics and spiritual nourishment, and the development of a true community founded on Gospel values hinge directly on the passion and competency of its leader if it is to be a place in which we “write...on the very spirits of human beings.” (Catholic Schools at the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 19) As a principal of Catholic schools, this is my mission. This is my commitment.

So let me welcome you again, one and all. May the love of God, and His son Jesus Christ be with you each and every moment of your lives. I am looking forward with great enthusiasm, hope and vision for this coming school year. I will be calling on you now, more fervently than in the past, for your creativity, your commitment and your time to grow and nurture the vision for the future of Most Holy Trinity Catholic School that we have planted together. So be prepared to

listen, and to answer. With your help and true commitment in spirit and action, we will respond to the call of His summons and begin to carry MHT into its next 50 wonderful years!

God bless,

Michael C. Brennan