THE Branches

BY: ARCHBISHOP JEFFREY S. GROB

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to ***teach*** *them.* (Matthew 5:1-2)

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Hello Everyone —

By the time you receive this weekly rumination of mine, we will already be three days into **Catholic Schools Week**. And I will have been blessed to celebrate a couple of school Masses marking this important week.

Personally, I could not be more excited to witness the tremendous work being done in our Catholic schools and to lend my voice in support of the many efforts underway in Catholic education throughout the archdiocese.

Our Catholic schools provide the opportunity for students to learn that God is present and active in their lives and in the world. They acquire skills to recognize the closeness of God in their daily living, especially in the midst of life's challenges.

Amidst conflicting societal messages that surround particularly children and young people of our day, our Catholic schools promote self-discipline by means of a clear moral vision that is rooted in the person of Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

By providing opportunities for daily prayer and regular encounters with our Eucharistic Lord, our Catholic schools educate their students in learning how to communicate with God and grow in a trusting relationship.

It is the vision of our Catholic schools to promote service for the sake of the common good. Many of the schools have service programs whereby students learn the responsibility to respond to the needs of others because we are all part of God's family.

With all that said, I am a realist and fully aware of the sacrifices that are put forth on a daily basis by so many people in order for our Catholic schools to continue. I laud each and every effort that is made to promote, grow and sustain our Catholic schools.

Catholic education has always been at the heart of the Catholic mission. Catholic education, and the students who are the product of it, have been called one of the "greatest works of the Church." And so they are. Catholic school graduates possess the potential of being leaven in society, tasked with helping the broader community to be the best that it can be.

And at the risk of being blunt — our communities — our society — definitely need a shot in the arm when it comes to the truth that rests at the heart of our Catholic faith.

So, please join me in support of and prayer for our Catholic schools and the good that continues to be accomplished by their existence in our midst.

Catholic Schools Week runs through next Saturday (January 31) which providentially is the day that the Church celebrates the memory of St. John Bosco. So, I encourage you to offer the following prayer with me on behalf of the young and those who educate them.

Dear St. John Bosco,
friend of the young, teacher in the ways of God,
your dedication to empowering the needy inspires us still.
Help me to work for a better world,
where the young are given the chance to flourish,
where the poor's dream for justice can come true,
and where God's compassion is shown to be real.
Intercede for me as I bring my needs to you
and to our heavenly Mother, the Help of Christians.
St. John Bosco, pray for us!

As I do for you, please pray for me,

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Archbishop of Milwaukee

ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE