

My first exposure to a Catholic school was my last two years of college at Franciscan University of Steubenville. I decided to transfer there for their priestly discernment program. I noticed something different about this school immediately upon arrival. Everywhere I looked I saw scores of students in blue shirts who chose to come back to school early, in the dreaded heat of August, to welcome us and help us move into our new dorm rooms. There were hundreds of them. When families pulled their car up to the dorm, the family would go check in, while their car was swarmed by a blue mob, quickly emptied, and everything taken to their dorm room for them. I had never experienced people before who were excited to carry someone else's minifridge up four flights of stairs.

Catholic schools exist for a different purpose – to help students, parents and staff alike encounter and follow Jesus Christ. To form hearts and minds in the likeness of Christ. To discover authentic truth, goodness and beauty in a world of lies and imitations. To commit ourselves in a radical way to love one another and live with mercy and kindness and generosity. And yes, provide an environment where it is safe to live and grow in our faith, as that is not always the case unfortunately, even in this land of the free.

I am grateful to our teachers and staff who strive to cultivate this environment each day. I am grateful for the students, and the wonderful gift of watching them grow and learn. I am grateful to our families who help one another in this Christian mystery, and the ways they live this mission out in their homes as well. I am grateful to all who support our works and labors. May each day find us, like the magi, together on our way to Christ.