

TO: Parish Priests
Principals
Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education

FROM: Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education

RE: An Evangelizing Catholic School

By now you have become familiar with the term new evangelization. It was popularized by Pope John Paul II. The new evangelization urges all people to deepen their relationship with Jesus and His Church. Pope John Paul II consistently called all Christians to join in this new evangelization, a call he stated “no believer or institution in the Church is exempt from, to proclaim Christ to all people” (*Mission of the Redeemer*, 3). This is what we are about in Catholic schools, to help others discover the person, Jesus Christ, so that they may be open to His Way and His Church. “If Catholics do not proclaim Jesus with their lives, then the Church becomes not the mother, but the baby sitter,” Pope Francis, April 18, 2013.

The administration, faculty, parents and students of a Catholic school are not exempt from proclaiming and celebrating Jesus Christ and evangelizing all who come through the doors of their school. “In the face of a growing indifference to God, the new evangelization must not be about a social or political structure, but the person of Jesus Christ,” Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger told a world gathering of catechists and religion teachers in Rome, December 10, 2000. Six years later, as Pope Benedict XVI, he would state that, “the first apostles like today’s were not heralds of an idea but rather witnesses of Christ before the world” (Vatican City, March 22, 2006).

It is our hope that this updated manual, *The Evangelizing Catholic School*, will not only raise your awareness, but also will compel you to make known the person of Jesus. It is our hope that as a faith community you will take the time to study the explanation of evangelization and its importance and that you will implement the strategies that are offered.

“The new evangelization is very much tied up with entering a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians...respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time.” (*Redemptoris Missio*, 2) In 2010 Pope Benedict XVI stated in *Verbum Domini*: “We cannot keep to ourselves the words of eternal life given to us in our encounter with Jesus Christ: they are meant for everyone, for every man and woman. ...It is our responsibility to pass on what, by God’s grace, we ourselves have received.”