

Christ the King

First Sunday of Lent 2021

My dear friends,

Almost nine years ago, when Christine Gebhardt left Christ the King School to accept a position at the University of Notre Dame, I invited Sherry Woodman (who was the assistant principal at the time) to consider leading our school. She asked for time to think about it, no doubt having some idea of the burden which comes with overseeing a community that educates and forms other people's children. To my great joy, she agreed. Over the past nine years she has with decided grace guided our school and overseen the education and formation of our children. And now, having given selfless service for so many years, she has asked to return to the classroom, her first love. And I have agreed.

Since 1937 when our parish was formed, each principal has brought unique gifts to the ministry of leadership of our school. In addition to her deep love for our students which continued from her days in the classroom, Sherry has supported our teachers in their desire to achieve higher degrees, allowing them better to serve our students. I am proud that, for her own development and on her own initiative, Sherry completed a two-year program at the Emmaus Leadership Academy at Boston College. There, with colleagues from other Catholic schools throughout the country, she further developed her ideas about the mission and the Catholic identity of our school, about governance and academic excellence. She has crafted with the help of her board a five-year program to strengthen every aspect of our school community. She has brought our school through a year unlike any other we have known – a year of pandemic – doing everything in her power to keep our students safe while providing as normal an environment as possible for their education and formation. She has continued to foster a comradery between the young students and the older students of our school, which is and has been a hallmark of our community. We learn from those who have gone before us. I am aware of the personal cost Sherry has borne for this service to our community – the long evening hours away from her own family, the burden of resolving the inevitable conflicts that arise in community – and I am grateful.

In the next few weeks I will meet with Sherry and the school board and, with their counsel, form a committee to assess the leadership needs of the school community and begin the search for the next principal of Christ the King School. We are unique in so many ways. Our students are talented and athletic, excelling in competitions beyond our walls, with many going on to distinguish themselves academically and in other ways in high school and university. We have talented teachers who guide our students and help them to form their consciences in the Catholic way of life. The person who follows Sherry must build on what she and those before her have started. And of all the gifts that we help to develop in a child, his or her learning to care for the other is among the most important. Intelligence and extraordinary gifts without the ability to care and to love lead to a lonely and unfulfilled life.

This Lent, let us pray for Sherry as she looks forward to her return to the classroom. Let us pray also for those on the committee who will help select a new principal, that we may find a candidate who is wise, intelligent and kind, but most of all someone who has a love for children and for Christ who is Lord.

Peace,



Fr. Dexter