



May 15, 2010

Dear IC School Family,

It is really hard for me to believe that we are so close to the end of the school year! We have had a wonderful year, though certainly not without challenges for the faculty, parents, Father Marc and me personally. My own son has had his physical bumps in the road.

My family and I made the decision not to travel to my recent graduation in order to be close to home in case we were needed. This would have been my third time to walk to receive a degree so I really do not feel deprived and I did get to listen to the graduation address and watch classmates walk through a live web connection. I feel graduated and I have officially received my Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (C.A.G.S.) in Educational Leadership from Plymouth State University. I would like to share the principal speaker's comments which resonated with me. Though certainly a secular ceremony, there was a noted theological message; that of the rhythm of life, the light and dark, joy, and sadness, death, and new life, of activity and Sabbath. I look upon the challenges or dark we have faced this year as material for reflection, an opportunity to see the forest for the trees, to look at the blessings of where we have been and determine our path for the future. I say blessings, because everything that comes our way can be used to grow closer to one another and to God (Romans 8:28).

Our first step toward the future should begin with an examination of how we are doing with faith formation. I ask are we, as my graduation speaker suggested (remember this was a secular speech), honoring Sabbath and teaching our children to do that. Are we taking the time to reflect, and to honor and worship God, are we receiving sacraments? I believe we are failing as a Catholic school if this is not happening. So, one of our goals as a faculty next year is to step up faith formation, both personally and with our children - and because we teach from the overflow in our own lives, I am challenging faculty and parents to set aside a daily Sabbath or reflection time and to encourage children to attend weekly (Sabbath) liturgy. Since many of them do not drive, that means you go too. You have permission to ask me if I am taking time daily to pray and reflect. You can also ask me if I am going to church on Sunday. This daily and weekly Sabbath is the rudder of our faith journey. Personally, I know that when the dark comes, I need the light of Christ to uphold me and see me through. I also need the prayers of my fellow believers, just as Moses did in Exodus 17 when Aaron and Hur held up his hands (because

Moses grew too tired) to invoke the power of God as the Israelites did battle with the Amalekites. When the going gets tough we need the unity of believers. You chose a Catholic education for your children, you chose to give them a faith to help them see the importance of God in their lives. Our first commitment as parents and a school is to strengthen and to MODEL that faith. Let's hold each other accountable.

IC is embarking on a great adventure this next school year. The whole school community will begin a Self-Study for the upcoming ten year, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Accreditation. You may remember the five year-interim evaluation that took place my first year here. This is the õbigö evaluation and will take many hands and hours to complete. It is really a school improvement process and I for one, welcome the opportunity to continue to help this great school continue to grow. You will note the professional development days in the 2010-2011 School Calendar that is posted today. These days will allow faculty and some of you to thoroughly prepare for the culmination of this year-long process with our accreditation visit by a NEASC Evaluation Team in October 2012. You will note the professional development days designated for the Self-Study are days that are also taken by Newburyport School System for professional development, the bus schedule is the same with the exception of our early release before Christmas.

In addition to a heavy commitment to the NEASC Self-Study, the faculty will be engaged in a discussion of the book *Schools Where Every One Belongs*. You will see in the new handbook when it comes out over the summer that there is a more comprehensive policy regarding bullying as well as delineated consequences for peer to peer aggression of all types. Your child's safety is extremely important to us as is the development of the social skills which promote the values we espouse in our Mission Statement.

I am extremely excited about next year. I am excited about going forward with our faculty to make our wonderful school even better. Please call me if you are interested in helping with the NEASC process.

I look forward to seeing you at the many end-of-the year activities!

Best wishes,  
Mary Reardon  
Principal