

September 17, 2009

Brothers & Sisters in Catholic Education,

As I was backing out of my garage this morning at 4:57am my headlights shown on my immediate neighbors (a family of raccoons) scurrying about their business in the woods that engulf my property. I'm sure some of the others (an old red fox, some possums and maybe even one of those black kitties with the white stripe down it's back) were in there too. As I pulled out on to the highway near my land I noticed the sliver of a crescent moon seemingly right next to the bright planet (Venus?) in the sky. And I thought to myself, how can one guy be so fortunate? I have a beautiful, loving wife, grown children, I live in a idyllic setting, and I am on my way to a job I thorough enjoy, that today is going to pay me to go to Mass. How fortunate, indeed.

In the two dozen years I was away form the Catholic school setting (professionally) the one thing I missed was the opportunity to include my faith as a welcomed and open part of my career. I sometimes wonder if we successfully convey to our children/students how fortunate they are to have such caring parents who are finding ways to pay for a Catholic school education and how much they are gaining by this exposure and opportunity.

As my drive in continued I thought not of the children who I will see today, but rather the ones I won't. As I continue to dig through the files and records of Our Lady's School I am disappointed to see once upon a recent time we were almost three times larger than we are now. And I wondered 'why?', 'what happened?' What caused those families to seek education for their children someplace else. What ever the cause, I don't want to believe it is an insurmountable reason.

My wife and I were at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta when the bombing took place. The next day at the track & field event the PA announcer asked everyone in the stadium to be on the look out for any suspicious looking packages, etc. I said to my wife "I think all 60,000 of us have just been deputized!". Driving into today I decided to do the same to you. I want to "deputize" each of you. I want you to seek out hose families that you know who were once Our Lady's School families and convince to comeback, to try us again, see once more the beauty of an excellent education that allows conversations about, and with the Lord, and once a week, as a part of the curriculum, attendance at Mass.

May Our Lady, whom we honor with the name of this school and child center, bless you and intercede with her Son for each of you.

Rick Erickson, PhD
Principal/Administrator