

“Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way”. Beloved, these words are taken from our Second Reading (1Cor 12:31-13:13). They underline one of the essential teachings of the Church, namely, the hierarchy of gifts and the hierarchy of truths. They teach us to recognize our gifts and prioritize their use. The place of love as the preeminent gift and the bond holding everything together is stressed. This is important as we mark our Catholic Schools Week. In the spirit of love of God and neighbor we must not neglect the value of our Catholic Schools for evangelization.

Our Catholic Schools are the organs through which we, not only promote the proper Christ-centered values, but also, teach the hierarchy of truths. God has given us a divine mission to bring Christ’s and God’s kingdom values into all the strata of our society – political, economic, educational, social, cultural, religious etc. We teach not just Mathematics, Science, Languages, Chemistry, etc; we teach values of peace, love, kindness, mercy, forgiveness, patience and above all about God and his Church. We teach about the meaning of human existence and our future hope of everlasting glory. In the First Reading (Jer 1:4-5, 17-19), God declares, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you”. Our Catholic Schools are indispensable in fulfilling this mission of Christ in our secular world.

As baptized Christians, we share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry of Christ. Our Catholic children need proper Catholic education in order to deal with the challenges of the godlessness in our society today. We cannot trade our Catholic Schools for anything; the Church needs us to step up our efforts to support it. Our children need us too. We cannot afford to allow poor financing to frustrate our commitment to Catholic education and evangelization. Our children must be trained to become “great witnesses” for the future Church.

Witnessing to God faithfully today has many challenges. There are many “unforeseeable ramifications”, amidst the aggressive secularism, vindictive liberalism and fashionable political correctness of our world. This has led to so much fear and insincerity even in high places in the Church. The missionary spirit and zeal we see in Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, the apostles and many early Christians, are woefully lacking today. Many Christians today are better off remaining quiet than speaking out for Christ because they bear “confused” witness. They say the wrong things, water down the Word of God, for cheap popularity in order not to offend or upset anyone.

How then can the beneficiaries ever know the truth and be set free? (cf. John 8:31-32).

Pope Paul VI, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, declares unequivocally that “Jesus Himself, the Good News of God, was the very first and the greatest evangelizer; He was so through and through: to perfection and to the point of the sacrifice of His earthly life” (Paul VI, *EN*, 7). Jesus who is love himself offered both gentle love and tough love, as the occasion demanded. He was sensitive and gentle to weak and repentant sinners but tough on the unrepentant filled with pomposity. We must guard against false love, that tendency of making unhealthy compromises under the cover of “sensitivity to people’s feelings”. In the end, our young Children never get to know the truth.

In today’s Gospel ([Lk 4:21-30](#)), Jesus proclaims, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” What a model! He proclaimed this truth in love, not out of fear or favor. He did not mislead anyone. Surely, he knew the obvious ramifications of making this declaration. Though many simple and pious people “spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth”, some “academic” folks confronted him, repudiated his claims and cast aspersions on his background, saying, “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?” They even tried to kill him, “to hurl him down headlong”. What a shame!

Christ and his teachings in the Church face much opposition today. Many highly placed Christians in the civil, educational, medical, political, and information media, speak about the sacred with utter recklessness. Liberalism has so infected people’s lives that they have become more and more removed from Christ and his Gospel. Our poor innocent young people are their victims. They hardly know “wrong” from “right”; many have lost the sense of sin. Some abuse drugs and some even carry guns to school. Going to Church on Sundays or engaging in prayer is becoming obsolete. The liberal education they receive in the public schools have deadened many innocent minds. Let us therefore wake up and rededicate ourselves to God’s mission in true love. Please, contribute your quota in support our Catholic Schools for the future of our children. Let us together train our children to become witnesses to faith, hope and love. May the Good Lord bless us in our commitment to his holy mission, through Christ our Lord. Amen.