

**Initial Remarks and Invocation – Khaki & Plaid Gala  
Growing Hope – February 3, 2024, 7:10 PM**

Thank you and welcome! It is good to be with you tonight! Thank you for your presence! It is wonderful to see so many schools and parishes represented here this evening. All of us in this room have the same goal...to grow Hope for the Future and make the dreams of Catholic School families come true. Every child is made in the image and likeness of God, who equips them with unique gifts, so they are prepared to do the good works He has in mind for them. You are here tonight because you recognize that a Catholic school education is a gift, and it changes the course of a child's life.

As we conclude Catholic Schools Week, let us celebrate all the teachers and students who make up our school communities. We celebrate the parents who sacrifice daily, in ways seen and unseen, because they choose to give their children the gift of an excellent Catholic school education. And we celebrate and thank God for YOU – our benefactors. With your support, 20% of all Catholic school students in the Archdiocese of San Antonio received tuition assistance this school year.

We know more families would like the opportunity for their child to attend one of our schools. We know that our Catholic schools are the perfect place for children to learn and to grow in their gifts so they can be the person God created them to be. Our alumni go on to be witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ and bring love and inspiration to the greater community. Indeed, all of God's gifts and

blessings are meant for receivers to bless others with the gift of themselves.

As he announced the first World Day of Children, to be celebrated in Rome on May 25th and 26th of this year, Pope Francis posed this challenge: *“What type of world do we want to transmit to the children who are growing up?”* And the Holy Father gave us the answer: *“Like Jesus, we want to put children at the center and take care of them.”*

The more we raise tonight, the more students we will be able to serve. I thank you for your generosity and willingness to contribute and sacrifice to make the dream of a Catholic school education a reality for the future leaders of our community! I pray all of you have fun tonight; that you bid high and bid often! May God bless our Catholic schools, Hope for the Future, and all of you who EMPOWER our students through prayer and financial help.

Aware of the constant protection of our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us, together, say our blessing for tonight’s meal: Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive, from your bounty, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.