

## **Homily – Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord Catholic Schools Convocation – August 6, 2024**

**Dear teachers and Catholic School staff members; dear administrators; dear Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dr. Marti West; today, I wish to affirm you in your noble vocation of nurturing and guiding young minds and hearts. Your work is a vital ministry in the Church, shaping not only academic intellects but especially souls. As you know, your calling requires great strength and, above all, the virtue of hope.**

**Hope is absolutely necessary for our daily Christian lives and for your roles as educators. Hope is a beacon that lights our path, especially in challenging times. To cultivate and sustain this hope, we must frequently renew our personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the true source of all hope. It is through these encounters, often found in prayer and the Eucharist, that we draw strength and inspiration. Jesus, who often withdrew to the mountain to pray, invites us to find our own “mountains” – moments of silence and communion with God – where hope can be renewed.**

**When you climb a mountain, you cannot stay on the summit forever; you must come down again. This reminds us of the reality of our journey. The joy and clarity we experience in moments of spiritual heights are gifts meant to fortify us for the inevitable valleys below. Just as Peter, James, and John were not meant to remain on the mountain of the Transfiguration, but were called to return to the everyday struggles – and to be witnesses after the Lord’s Pasion and death – we, too, must bring the hope we receive from our moments of joy into our daily tasks and trials.**

In your roles, you are called to be missionaries of hope. This mission challenges you to first embrace hope in your own hearts, even when faced with difficulties, and then to share this hope with your coworkers, students, and their families. Our classrooms, hallways, and offices become places where the hope of Christ can shine brightly, offering encouragement and strength to all we encounter.

We are not alone in this mission. The voice of the Father, heard during the Transfiguration, echoes in our hearts: *“This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”* In listening to Jesus, we find the courage to face our fears and uncertainties, knowing that He walks with us, saying, “Rise, do not be afraid.”

Let us take advantage of joyful moments in life as preparation for moments of trial. Those moments of grace are not just for our enjoyment but are also a source of strength when the path becomes steep and challenging. By anchoring ourselves in hope, we can help others see the “higher regions” even when they cannot see them for themselves.

Not too long ago, Pope Francis encouraged a group of Catholic School teachers saying: *“Be assured: seeds sown in hope take root and always grow!”* In this new school year, let us renew our commitment to being faithful missionaries of hope. Let our hearts be open to receiving hope and let our actions reflect the hope we profess. By doing so, we will not only transform our own lives but also the lives of those entrusted to our care.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, with her intercession, bless you abundantly in your mission, and may the hope of Christ be ever-present in your hearts.