

Installation of President, Mercy High School

Introduction

This morning we have gathered to invoke the Lord's blessing on Mary Beth Lennon as President of Mercy High School. And in asking God to bless her, we are also asking the Lord to bless all who are part of this school community: the Sisters of Mercy who founded Mt. St. Agnes in 1867 & Mercy High School in 1960; on the administration, teachers, alumnae, of this school, and most especially upon you, the students, and upon your families.

It is a proud day for Mercy High School because, as you know, Ms. Lennon is a 1985 graduate of Mercy. How wonderful to have an alumna and how grateful we are for your service as the first lay person to serve as president on a permanent basis. Looking over your resume, Mary Beth, I see that you are steeped in the Mercy tradition and have a long and impressive background in Catholic higher education as well. So on this day so full of hope and you, we ask the Lord Jesus who comes to be with us in the power of his death and resurrection – to accompany you each day as you seek to lead and serve this community of faith, learning, formation, and service.

Education & Catholic Education

Students, when you have to do a lot of homework or worry about a test or about writing a paper, you may not think that education is actually designed to expand your horizons. But when you step back and think about it for a minute, that's what's happening every day in Mercy High School and indeed in any high school that is worthy of the name. You are being introduced into new worlds of learning and wisdom, in math, science, history, social studies, languages, the list is endless. You are acquiring knowledge that will be useful later on but you are also acquiring the kind of knowledge that helps you think more deeply about yourselves, your relationships, and the world which are being called to shape.

Let me refer to your mission statement – *“Seeking the development of each student's full human potential, Mercy emphasizes the values of personal responsibility and cooperation with others, the practice and attitude of careful and critical thinking,*

and the commitment to excellence.

Aware of the complexity and rapid change of today's world, Mercy encourages students to confront contemporary issues and events, to examine them critically, and to respond to them from the base of clearly defined values."

But at Mercy High School you are being introduced everyday to the source of all wisdom, learning, and skill – you are being introduced to that “Someone” who is greater than anyone or anything else we can imagine.

In today's reading we meet Job, a man who had everything going for him, until God allowed him to be put him to the test, to see if he'd keep his faith in adversity. You can imagine Job questioned God's justice and mercy and in today's reading God responds to Job: “Have you ever in your lifetime commanded the morning & shown the dawn its place? ...Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth... Tell me if you know all...” Job had to admit he was no match for God's greatness.

It is a good thing, in your education, to think about the greatness of God. It is a good thing as your minds are opened to worlds of learning to be in touch with the One who is the source of all knowledge and of life itself. And in a place like Mercy High School, you can do just that. *“Mercy shares in the teaching mission of the Church, and grounds religious education in the Roman Catholic tradition. Encouraging a reflective and active Christian life, it challenges students to explore and develop their experience of faith through their own growth and decision-making, their participation in liturgy and prayer, their service to those in need, and their responsibility to work for justice in this world. Mercy welcomes students of other faith traditions.”*

Discovering Christ

And what a wonderful thing to discover in our lives, again and again, that the One who is greater than anyone or anything we could ever imagine is not a cold, impersonal, force, but rather someone who loves us deeply. St. John Paul II often said that we experience God's love as mercy, for his love offers us forgiveness and encouragement, so long as our hearts are open to his love.

Pope Francis also reminds us that Mercy is the heart of the Gospel. “Jesus Christ

love you; he gave his life to save you, and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, & free you.” And here at Mercy you can discover something else the Pope says to us: “We were created for what the Gospel offer us: friendship with Jesus and love of our brothers and sisters.”

So as you begin this new chapter in the history of Mercy High School, I pray that the joy of discovering God’s mercy every day will be at the heart of your experience here and the experience of many generations of young women after yourselves. May the Lord bless this high school and all who are part of its mission now and for many years to come!