



Saint Agnes School
Arlington Catholic
High School

President's Monthly Message

January 2024

Presidential Perspectives with Dr. Andrew Keough

As I round out 37 years in education I find I am much more reflective about the career I chose so many years ago. In retrospect, I consider myself very fortunate to have worked closely with young people for as long as I have.



Yesterday, as has become part of my daily routine, I drove into work listening to the news of the day. There were heartbreaking stories from the fighting in the Middle East and Ukraine, stories of bombings, missile attacks, violence against innocent civilians, even another school shooting. During the commercial breaks, the deluge of heavy content continued. It was now time for the classic political advertisements, wherein candidates lob virtual bombs at each other's work records, making absolutely certain to hurt each other or their character in the process. The messages were clearly designed to instill hate, doubt, and suspicion of one American toward another. At the end of each message the candidate would say, "I am _____ and I endorsed this message"... Seriously, I thought to myself... and you're proud of it? It was hard not to enter the doors of the school feeling discouraged about the future for myself, my country, the world, and especially, for our unborn grandchild, due in February.

However, the negative avalanche seemed to melt away as I walked into the "First Friday Mass" with our elementary school students. I breathed a sigh of relief for the brief reprieve "from the madness" as I walked along rows and rows of students toward my seat. Directly across the aisle from me was a little girl crying and being comforted by her teacher. She was one of our 3-5 year old students and I couldn't help but think at that moment, she really wanted/needed her parents as she was so little and clearly upset. Honestly, the sad child only added to the already difficult start to my day, but fortunately things were about to change.

As I watched the teacher work to calm the child, I noticed the little girl sitting next to her taking in her classmate's despair. Her face too became discouraged, yet she was not about to stand helplessly by. She knew she needed to act and she quickly began to rub and pat her friends back; seeking to comfort her in the only way she knew how, through a simple act of love. It was the exact demonstration of selfless care and love for another that I needed to see to renew my faith in mankind and not surprisingly, it came from a child.

I took a picture of the scene, hoping to provide others with a glimpse of the hope that children can provide us with daily. They seem to simplify life in all the right ways. We educators are truly blessed! I hope this picture lifts your spirits in the same way it did mine!

Sincerely,

Andrew

