

# Catholic schools start year with opening mass and awards

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**WASHINGTON** – Catholic school principals, teachers and staff from across the Archdiocese of Washington gathered at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception today to open the 2015-2016 school year with a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington.

Cardinal Wuerl began his homily by citing the words of the great commissioning from Saint Matthew's Gospel, "Go and make disciples of all nations...Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28: 16-20)

While there is temptation to think of this command as the task given to the Apostles and something that "the Church" does, the cardinal said, this commission extends to each of us. "We are to envision ourselves as those who hear that challenge and receive that commission. Each day begin all over again teaching those entrusted to our care all that Jesus has taught us."

"Our role in Catholic education is to provide a frame of reference for a life that reflects the words of eternal life. We seek to impart our Catholic identity and we do this in an age of challenge," said the cardinal.

Referencing his pastoral letter on Catholic identity, Being Catholic Today, Cardinal Wuerl encouraged the gathered educators to help the students entrusted to their care to more fully come to understand what it means to be a Catholic today. "In this sense, we see ourselves as those first disciples did as they came away from that great commissioning," said the cardinal.

The cardinal invited the archdiocesan school principals, teachers and staff gathered at the Mass to renew publically their commitment to be witnesses, the Church's witnesses, to the Gospel of the Risen Lord. "You are, once again, being commissioned, being invited into the great commissioning that we listened to in the Gospel today, "Go and make disciples of all nations."

"How appropriate that we would renew our commitment to spread the Gospel and to share the Good News at the opening of this academic year and on the very vigil of the arrival of Pope Francis who tells us we are to be missionary disciples," Cardinal Wuerl continued. "We, however, as teachers in Catholic schools, recognize that we do not carry out our mission alone. The school itself provides us a focus for our efforts."

As the cardinal concluded his homily, he stated, "I do not know what was going through the minds of those disciples with the challenge ringing in their ears that they were to go make disciples of all nations, but I suspect, among all of the emotions and sensations, there had to be: some excitement, some enthusiasm, some joy. We, too, should begin this new year with enthusiasm, excitement and joy because we recognize that what we are doing is truly what Christ asks of us. We know that just like those first disciples, Jesus' promise would be kept: 'I am with you always, until the end of the age.'"

Following the Mass, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Mr. William H. Ryan announced the names of the teachers and principals celebrating more than 25 years of service, as well as the schools marking significant anniversaries. They were brought forward to be recognized and congratulated by the cardinal.

Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Washington open on Monday, August 31. There are 95 early learning, elementary and secondary Catholic schools serving almost 27,000 students in the District of Columbia and Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties in Maryland.

Below is a list of schools marking special anniversaries this year, followed by the list of Catholic school educators commemorating significant years of service with the schools in the Archdiocese of Washington.

## Schools

110 years	Sacred Heart School, Washington, DC
100 years	St. Mary School, Bryantown, Md.
90 years	St. Martin of Tours School, Gaithersburg, Md.
90 years	St. Mary of the Assumption School, Upper Marlboro, Md.
75 years	Our Lady of Lourdes School, Bethesda, Md.
60 years	Our Lady of Victory School, Washington, DC

## Educators

25 years	
Mary DelBianco	Holy Redeemer School, Kensington, Md.
Kirk Gaddy	Saint Francis International School, Silver Spring, Md.
Anna Gomes	Saint Francis International School, Silver Spring, Md.

30 years	
Marcy Aguilar	Saint Francis International School, Silver Spring, Md.
Mary Ruth Clark	Holy Redeemer School, Kensington, Md.
Mary Kay Frazier	St. Peter School, Olney, Md.
Shirley Jeffords	St. Bernadette School, Silver Spring, Md.
Bonnie Marosy	Little Flower School, Bethesda, Md.
Frances Natalicchio	St. Peter School, Olney, Md.
Anne Vucci	St. Peter School, Olney, Md.

35 years

Mary Ellen Beane	St. Bernadette School, Silver Spring, Md.
Lolita Jardeleza	The Academy of the Holy Cross, Kensington, Md.
Stephen Walker	St. Vincent Pallotti High School, Laurel, Md.
Elizabeth A. Watson	St. Peter School, Waldorf, Md.
Henry Wroblewski	Saint Francis International School, Silver Spring, Md.

40 years

Marie Diane Cooksey	St. Mary School, Bryantown, Md.
Doris Glenn	Holy Family School, Hillcrest Heights, Md.
Cheryl A. Hanton	Saint Augustine School, Washington, DC

45 years

Thomasina M. Armwood	Gonzaga College High School, Washington, DC
Leonila R. DiRaimo	St. John the Evangelist School, Silver Spring, Md.
William J. Wilson, Jr.	Gonzaga College High School, Washington, DC