



St. Anthony of Padua
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

May 3, 2024 / A Note From Father Jesse

Dear St. Anthony of Padua School Family,

This year, I have continued to stress the importance of living the gospel-based Cube of Love at every school Mass which is reinforced not only in the classroom but also during play time and, yes, my hope is that it is also reinforced in the home. The word of God should permeate every aspect of our lives without exception. That is why I have enjoyed hearing our students share their experiences of how they put these specific scriptures into practice in the most varied moments of life. It is crucial to have this gospel foundation as early as possible because children will carry it with them for the rest of their lives and it will help them especially as they face challenges in dealing with conflict, resolving differences, and building enjoyable and harmonious social relationships and interactions with others.

One of the sides of the Cube says ‘to see and love Jesus in every neighbor’ because as Mathew 25:40 tells us, whatever we do or do not do to others, Jesus considers done, or not done, to himself – both the good and the bad. It is sobering to know that in the final exam question of our lives we will be judged on how well or how badly we managed to see and love Jesus in each neighbor. When we take this point to heart, and really and intentionally seek out during the day to find, see, and love Jesus in the other, the fact is, it does not change the other person. It changes the one seeking to find, see, and love Jesus in the other because by doing so we stop ourselves from reacting uncharitably; we bite our tongue before we say something harsh; we put aside our arrogance or rudeness; we control our road rage...that is, we become more Christlike. When we get into the habit of constantly seeking to see and love Jesus in the other, if not already, we identify with every human being because our eye becomes simple, like God’s. God sees in each person his Son, Jesus. To have an eye which is simple means to have the vision, the gaze of God, to be and to live as God, and so to live in love, in the total gift of oneself toward *everyone*. And this is another side of the Cube: ‘to love everyone because God loves everyone’ (Mt 5:43-48).

At a human level we naturally make distinctions based on all sorts of things: parishioner vs non-parishioner; contributor vs non-contributor; background, race, education, social status, and so on. This can lead to things such as favoritism which excludes others, unfairness, and even derision of the other. It is precisely then when we can go beyond these distinctions and tell ourselves: ‘love everyone because God loves everyone.’ Our hearts expand, and everyone becomes a potential friend. What is more, we discover that the other is truly another *me*, and so we understand what Jesus means when he declares the second greatest commandment: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mt 22:39). Just as I want goodness, and blessing, and friendship, and happiness for myself, so too do I want all of that for each and every person.

We know that each family is called to be a domestic church. The home plays such a vital role in fostering this gospel life which in turn is nurtured and sustained by the sacramental life of the Church. I encourage you to roll the Cube of Love together as a family at some point during the day every day, and then together commit to living what comes up. And then, find the time to share how you managed, or how you struggled, to live that scripture. You will see how engaging this practice can be transformative. The spiritual life of the whole family will be enhanced because living the 6 scriptures of the Cube is a way to respond to the universal call to holiness. And as each home is a cell of a whole society, we can live with the certainty of hope for a new world where people love one another.

May we, as a community of faith, renew our resolve to see and love Jesus in each other in the dynamic of his commandment to mutual love; to see each other as new, and expand our hearts toward everyone. The other is another me. I cannot hurt the other without hurting myself. But also, I do myself well when I praise and lift the other up. Let all of this be our ongoing daily resolve.

Especially in this month of May, let's entrust to Mary this desire and effort to love as God loves because we are made in His image, and He is Love.

My blessing to each and every one of you,

Fr. Jesse Garcia, Pastor