

Dear DePaul Catholic Families,

As another school year comes to an end, I find myself reflecting not on grades, championships, awards, performances, or accomplishments, but on people.

Henri Nouwen often reminded us that one of the greatest spiritual truths is that we are not what we do, what we have, or what others say about us. Rather that We are the beloved of God.

In a school community, it is easy to forget this. We spend much of the year measuring things: tests, papers, wins, losses, attendance, rankings, acceptances, and achievements. While these things have their place, they never tell the whole story of who we are.

It is found in friendships that were formed and strengthened. It is found in teachers who stayed after school to help a struggling student. It is found in coaches who taught lessons that extended far beyond the playing field. It is found in parents and guardians who sacrificed quietly for their children. It is found in students who showed kindness when no one was watching.

As I think about the end of the school year, I am reminded of a tradition from my years in seminary. Every year, as the academic year came to a close, we would gather and sing the Easter hymn *The Strife Is O'er*. The opening line always struck me: *"The strife is o'er, the battle done."*

At first, it seemed like a fitting way to celebrate the completion of another year of classes, papers, exams, and responsibilities. But over time, I came to realize that the hymn points to something much deeper. The battle it celebrates is not simply the end of a school year. It is Christ's victory over sin and death. It is the proclamation that darkness does not have the final word. It is the reminder that because Christ is risen.

In many ways, a school year contains its own share of battles. There are academic challenges, personal disappointments, moments of uncertainty, and days when simply showing up requires courage. Some of us carry burdens that others never see.

And yet, here we are.

Not because everything was perfect. Not because every goal was achieved. But because God's grace has carried us through another year.

To our parents: thank you for the trust you place in us and for the sacrifices you make every day for your children. To our faculty and staff: thank you for the countless ways you have revealed God's presence through your dedication, patience, and care.

As we begin summer, perhaps the words of that Easter hymn can become our prayer as well. The strife is over. The battle is done.

May this summer be a time of rest, renewal, and gratitude. May you spend time with those you love. May you find moments of silence to hear God's voice. And may you never forget that you are loved by God.

Thank you for allowing me to share this year with you.

“Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. The strife is o’er. The battle is won.”

With gratitude and prayers,

Father Frank Lennie ’10
School Chaplain