

La Purisima School

Californian, Orange (United States)

40th Anniversary Year (1965-2005)

In North America we are beginning a new school year. Our parish school is celebrating its' 40th Anniversary year since the Sisters of the Company of Mary began this school with four classrooms in 1965, This school year we do not have a teaching sister assigned to our school. Our faculty knows that it is up to us to continue the educational philosophy of St. Jeanne at our school.

We truly believe that we need this foundation of St. Jeanne's beliefs in educating our students. There are many pressures in education in the United States. First there is the academic need for our students to be prepared for a world economic system. Our parents are making many sacrifices to pay the tuition at our school, and want top academic grades from their children no matter the ability level. With this demand, the staff feels the great need to teach the children a Christian value system, and we know we are counter-cultural in this attempt. We believe that we are a living community, and when a student walks through our gates and is exposed to a set of spiritual values, we must recognize the reality that they may be an entirely different family belief system at home.

We instill in our students the values of social justice and have many projects an opportunities for service. I know that we are successful in instilling in the students a sense that they need to respect each God-given life. At our May crowning and Pin Ceremony the written reflections of each student are read.

In discussing this article with the other laity in our province we all realize the need for Catholic education in this country. A student spends six hours a day with us and then returns home to many hours of television and socialization with others questioning the student's beliefs. Yet our students are living examples of the values taught to them. Our graduates are returning to teach at Catholic institutions, they are generous in their support for the Company of Mary, they send their own children back to our schools, they are ethical in their business, and they do their best to live a life that reflects their education.

I personally value the General Chapter experience in meeting so many others that share the same educational philosophy. Meeting other laity from other countries was such an interesting experience, and realizing all they are doing in their countries was a gift in itself.

Kathy Manulkin

Director La Purisima School Californian, Orange