

August 15, 2008
Feast of the Assumption

Dear Students,

Think for a moment about what our world would be like if everyone – man, woman, and child – acted out of love for one another. Imagine a world free of injustice, a place where the sick are cared for, the homeless are sheltered, and the hungry are fed. See a world where differences aren't just tolerated, but are understood and appreciated. It would be a world united in peace.

That, of course, isn't always the world we see when we look around us. Something as simple as a morning commute reminds us that there are many people in *need* – in need of food and shelter, in need of peace and love, in need of health and happiness. You have the power to satisfy those needs for others.

Our theme this year, "*Open the Eyes of our Hearts,*" is inspired by a passage from the New Testament's Letter to the Ephesians. In it, Saint Paul writes, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which God has called you..."

What does it mean to open the eyes of our hearts? It is about seeing where love is needed – whether it's a person on the street or a lonely kid in the café – and responding accordingly. When we pray to have the eyes of our hearts opened, we are asking God to let us readily see the people who need us most so that we can alleviate their burdens.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., the late Jesuit philosopher, once said, "Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfill them."

That lofty world I wrote about earlier is a possibility, but you have to be the ones to bring about the change. Let it start at Prep. Open the eyes of your hearts, experience God's love, and share it with others. That is what a Jesuit education is about.

As you prepare for the coming school year, I'd ask that you take a look at the back of this letter, which includes some important information for students and their families. You can also find more information about the Campus Ministry program by visiting <http://ministry.spprep.org>.

I look forward to seeing you in a few weeks. Until then, enjoy the rest of your summer.

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam,

Mr. Ryan Heffernan
Director of Campus Ministry

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FRESHMEN: IgNite, our mandatory freshman retreat, begins after orientation on Friday, Sept. 5, 2008. The retreat is a fun and relaxed opportunity for students to learn about Prep and the Jesuits, the religious order that sponsors our school. The retreat culminates with our Freshman Family Mass, which begins on Saturday, Sept. 6, at 4 p.m. in Saint Peter's Church. Family members are encouraged to join us for the liturgy! A packing list and other information is available online at <http://ministry.spprep.org/ignite>.

You should also be getting a call soon from the senior who will serve as your Big Brother for the year. This mentoring program is a chance for freshmen to get comfortable with Prep and build relationships not just with each other, but with upperclassmen.

SOPHOMORES: We will continue our successful Sophomore "Grad-at-Grad" Conversations program this year. Sophomores and their parents/guardians are required to take part in a "Grad-at-Grad Conversation," which is a half-hour individual reflection with a Saint Peter's Prep employee. The conversation will allow the sophomore and his parents to reflect on the accomplishments of his first two years at Prep, set goals for his last two years, and review and discuss these reflections with a Prep teacher, administrator, or staff member. The context and agenda for the conversation is taken in part from the sophomore Halftime Retreat (March 11, 2009) and from the Grad-at-Grad statement, which is in the second-half of Prep's Philosophy and Goals statement in the Student Handbook. More information will be distributed in January.

Campus Ministry will also be launching an extensive weekend immersion trip program this year as part of the school's Christian Service program. Expect information to be distributed in the opening weeks of the school year.

JUNIORS: Don't forget to register for the Emmaus retreat, which is scheduled eight times throughout the year. Students can only sign-up online by visiting <http://ministry.spprep.org/registration>. Though the retreat is optional, almost 78 percent of last year's juniors attended Emmaus.

Also, please bring your Christian Service Journal to school with you in September. Adequate completion of a reflection journal is required in order to fulfill junior-year service hours.

SENIORS: Spots for KAIROS are quickly being filled. The retreat, which takes place over four days at the Jersey Shore, is a time for faith and fellowship. At its core, KAIROS is a time for us to seek God in those at our side. Registration takes place solely online at <http://ministry.spprep.org/registration>.

Campus Ministry is sponsoring several new initiatives this year, including:

- A two-week international service-immersion trip to Quito, Ecuador
- Weekend immersion trips for sophomores
- A re-organized Christian Life Community (CLC)
- Weekly Monday morning prayer services

More information on these programs will be distributed during the first weeks of school. Please contact a member of the Campus Ministry staff with any questions or concerns.