

Good morning, what a wonderful opportunity to join together as a community of Christ's heart this morning.

Thank you Fr. Dotson for celebrating this Mass of the Holy Spirit with us. You too have just recently begun your ministry at our neighboring St. Charles Borromeo Parish. On behalf of the Academy, I welcome you to the neighborhood and to Philippine's home.

Sr. Hammond and members of the Provincial Team, thank you for your blessing and continued prayers as we together engage in the work begun by Saint Madeleine Sophie and that which was brought to this holy place by St. Rose Philippine.

Mr. Dulle and members of the Board, thank you for your confidence, generosity and support as together we shepherd and act as stewards of this great legacy—the Academy of the Sacred Heart.

Mrs. Ficken and members of the Transition Committee, thank you for the wonderful welcome you have extended to my mother and me. Thank you for showering me with welcome and insuring that I had what I needed to support settling into this our new home. And thank you for this beautiful installation Mass and ceremony.

Alumni, thank you for loving this, your, school. Thank you for wanting the very best for the students who walk these halls today and who will walk them in the century to come. Your passion is palpable, your commitment unquestionable.

Faculty, staff and administrators, without you the relational and transformational Sacred Heart education that occurs here each day would not be possible. As I said on the first day we were all together, no one person can do this alone...we need the support of each other. Not only do you walk on Philippine's path, you are the living, breathing extension of her vision and God's love. Thank you.

Parents, thank you for entering into partnership with us. Thank you for sharing the most precious gift that God has given you, your child. Your commitment, your support and your prayers will serve as examples for generations of Sacred Heart families to come...and will help insure the future for generations of children of the Sacred Heart yet to know this second home.

Students, most especially students...you are the reason for all of this. It is the love and hope that your parents have for you that has brought you to this school and kept you here. It is your love for your teachers and for each other that brings all of us joy and purpose. Thank you for being here, thank you for your warm welcome on my first day and each day since, and thank you for learning Cordero de Dios and singing it so beautifully this morning.

Thank you all, I am so very grateful.

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad!

Today is a day for rejoicing...as we prepare to enter into our third century of Sacred Heart education, it is a good time to reflect on what has been done, and so I am so appreciative that the Alumni projects of recent years and the Bicentennial Committee has helped us to do that.

When I walk these halls and take in all that surrounds me, I am in awe. To think that all of this started in the Duquette mansion—translation... a log cabin—is pretty amazing!

As I pass the photos of the early graduating classes, I am emboldened. The families that sent their children here in those days were trail blazers, daring to envision something different, something greater for their children. Your parents hold the same values. And while many things have changed across the years and will continue to... that which drives us--making known the Love of God present in the world, and preparing you to go forth to do the same--continues and will go on.

On my walks through these halls, I see and hear what 21st century education feels and looks like. I see students learning to read and write, to create and dream. I witness students who are open to mystery and are learning about God, questioning and building their own relationship with Him.

I see and hear students learning in English, Spanish and, once again, French. And in doing so, we are opening the door to understanding cultures, customs and peoples well beyond the banks of the Missouri.

I see teachers using technology to enhance instruction and see students learning the responsible use of the powerful tool they have been given. I see students not just learning, but engaging in science--collecting meaningful data that will join that of others to help us grow in our understanding.

I see coding and engineering principles being taught which is vitally important, because we know that, of the top ten in-demand careers right now, eight of them did not even exist when the students in the 4th Class were born.

What does this mean for the educators in the room? It means that we are preparing our students for a future that has not yet been envisaged. Now that is a challenge! One that is being embraced each day at Philippine's school.

We can be very excited about the future of the Academy, in the words of Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ:

Your life is a sacred journey. It is about change, growth, discovery, movement and transformation...It is continually expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, teaching you to see clearly and deeply.

So too is this true in life of a student, a teacher, a parent, a leader... a school. In these days ahead, we will celebrate our founding—there is much to be proud of. Likewise, we will enjoy each day God gives to us knowing that it is in these current moments, and how we spend the gift of them, that our future and that of others is being formed.

The path from the log cabin on the hill to the Academy of today was challenging, so too will be the walkway into the future and well beyond. The challenges faced by St. Madeleine Sophie and Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne serve as example of what is possible. Theirs was not the work of a day but of a lifetime, and as I begin my tenure following so many great Religious of the Sacred Heart I stand ready to serve.

I am humbled by the honor of following in the footsteps of Philippine and with prayerful help will lead and seek to fulfill her mission to the best of my ability with the help that God will provide.

Thank you, I am so very grateful.