

As I write this article it is snowing pretty hard and the teachers and students are home on a snow day...it is quite the winter wonderland outside! I got to enjoy the sight of a dad sledding down a small hill with his son, both laughing the whole time. Hopefully you've managed the elements fairly well this week, please check in on family or neighbors that you know might need a helping hand with groceries or snow shoveling.

This coming week is Catholic Schools Week and if you were able to come to any of the weekend Masses you were able to hear from one of our school families after Communion. The parish and neighborhood are truly blessed to have a Catholic school. I was blessed to attend a Catholic grade school and high school as well. It is a tremendous sacrifice financially for families but bears so much fruit for the children and society. Please check the school page for information about school tours or other events this week.

In case you didn't know, the tax credit scholarship program through the state Illinois has been a huge help for our school. Last year, even **though we had students who qualified for the scholarship, we didn't receive enough donations to fund all of the qualified applicants. The scholarship is only made possible because people choose to donate to an SGO (Scholarship Granting Organization) like Empower Illinois and then choose our specific school. Also, because of a generous donor your gift this will be matched 2:1 until February 28th!**

You can eliminate your state tax this year completely by simply donating to a qualifying school (like St. Elizabeth of the Trinity) and get the matching dollars. Here's an example: a donor with about \$75,000 in income could make a donation of \$5,000 to Empower Illinois, in cash or stock. The donation would eliminate their Illinois state tax liability (approximately \$3,750). Finally, that \$5,000 donation would be matched and provide an extra \$10,000 in scholarship support. To learn more go to:
<http://schools.archchicago.org/tax-credit-scholarships>.

The ultimate goal of a Catholic school is to teach the students the Catholic faith that Jesus Christ gave us, He is the ultimate teacher. The Gospel this week says that when Jesus taught ***"the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."*** The Greek words used to describe Jesus' authority are "ex ousia". Jesus taught "ex ousia" which means He taught from His own being. Christ's ability to teach with authority comes from the fact that He is the Son of God, God from God and Light from Light.

We are like the scribes because we quote other authorities. The scribes would have said "we should do such and such because it's in the Law of Moses, or because the prophet Elijah says so." We all have to refer to a higher authority to teach because we know we're not the ultimate authority on anything. But Jesus doesn't have to refer to higher authority because He is the highest authority and so the people marveled ***"What is this? A new teaching with authority."***

Friends, contrary to popular ideas today, truth can be known. Christ teaches the truth and enables His Church to teach with His own divine authority. And it is good for us that He did so that we, like the people of Jesus' own time, may come to believe in Him.

"If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Mike