

Dear friends of Sts. Peter and Paul:

I like to fantasize and dream sometimes. When I was a child, I could hardly wait to school to be over and as that last day approached, I faced it with an odd mixture of anticipation and dread. I was looking forward to the summer without the books and the assignments; dread in the sense that it was on the final day of school that I learned that a new chapter of my life will begin.

Of course, teachers allowed me to continue and I must have liked it because I just kept coming back to school ever since.

I went from elementary school to high school to college and when I left the role of student behind me, I came back as a teacher, A.P. and principal. It has been 52 years since I started being an educator. Fifty-two years that is over 5 decades and what a time it has been.

It is certain, I suppose that when you have reached that number of years, people will come to you and ask you about the significance of what you have gone through over those decades; what you have seen, experienced, become and what your made of all of it.

Certainly, that has happened to me and it has made me think of: what I have seen, what it has meant, what I have learned.

I have come to believe that the lot of a truthful “madman” like Don Quijote is not an unusual one. The real world he wants to bring back had never existed and he discovered, as I have, that one cannot live in a poetic or utopic world though he was quite willing to accept suffering for his ideal. In his madness he was on a higher level than reality but eventually he had to accept the limitations of an imperfect world. Man must always strive to create through the use of his imagination but even when that absolute disappears and he must die, his Christian ideal of “hacer bien” continues. It must be remembered that Don Quijote dies as Alonso Quijano El Bueno. Through the years I have learned that in order to adjust to reality and live in a real world the idealist must temper his/her idealism with realism and the realist must look upward occasionally. Each person to be whole needs some of both in him/her.

I have come to believe that children are a mirror of our society. I have watched children develop a heightened awareness of their society as a whole and of their community. I have seen in children heroic acts of love and goodness. It has been my privilege over 52 years to witness and to be part of much. Sometimes shocked, sometimes distraught, sometimes worried, sometimes amazed, sometimes encouraged and overjoyed. I have watched and been part of the lives of children and if I must make sense of it all, I must have an answer for myself that will satisfy one. Children response to love and for as long as parents and children, teachers and students, exist the human spirit continues to reach out into the world.

I have come to believe that God loves me personally and individually and has called me to be his disciple. My faith and my trust are in Him in order to find peace and joy. I have learned to build into the structure of my life to be steel, to be silent, to be with the Lord. I have tried to witness by my own way of life all that I teach, all that I believe and put into practice.

In my 52 years in catholic education, I have experienced much and learned much. I hope I will remember what I have learned, but it will be secondary to the love that I have experienced from the children who shared the school premises of St Agatha School and very specially Sts. Peter and Paul School.

As I stand before you, I want to express my most sincere appreciation to those who have shared their lives with me.

Gratitude is the memory of the heart. As I bid farewell to a long career in education.

I want to thank my teachers from St. George en la Habana, Cuba to those in Miami High, Miami Dade College and the University of Miami who encouraged me to go on especially Dr. John H. Croghan.

I want to thank the members of the Dept. of Schools, past and present for their dedication and support. New I want to thank the faculty of St. Agatha for 11 years and my former pastor, Bishop Felipe Estevez.

I want to thank my friends who have been my Rock of Gibraltar many times.

I want to thank Father Anthony Navarrete. My only regret is that his untimely death prevented his seeing the fruition of his confidence in me.

I want to thank my superiors through the years, especially sister Mary Eleanor, SSJ, Sister of St Joseph. Together we shared 10 wonderful years. The SSJ were probably the reason I remained in catholic education.

I want to thank the faculty and staff of Sts. Peter and Paul School for being an inspiration to me. Your commitment and professionalism are incredible.

I want to thank Mrs. Maria Bustamante, my A.P. at St. Agatha School, and very especially Mrs. Jocelyn Zlatkin. I wish Mrs. Zlatkin all of God's blessings as she embarks in the noble task of being the new Principal of Sts. Peter and Paul School. I know she will soar to big heights.

I want to thank Father Juan M. Lopez for his commitment to education, for his support and his understanding. I have been very blessed to have been the Principal and parishioner of such an extraordinary priest and human being.

I want to thank the students past and present for they are the one who have instituted in me the desire to address the academic excellence that they deserved.

I want to thank my family and friends. All of you have been instrumental in difficult and decision-making time.

I want to thank my parents. They have wondered into unknown land with our Creator and they have shed many blessings. Both my parents were very concerned and loving especially during discouraging times when things did not go according to plan.

Gracias, mami y papi.

It has been a wonderful journey. Thank you for being part of it all.

Please remember that today is the first day of the rest of your life.

Thanks for the memories.

Carlota E. Morales, Ed.D.

Principal