Principal’s Remarks
National Honor Society Induction Ceremony
December 13, 2011

It is my pleasure to welcome, families, friends, students and staff to today’s third annual Induction Ceremony into the Our Lady, Star of the Sea Chapter of the National Honor Society. I enjoy this day tremendously and am pleased and proud of the accomplishments of today’s inductees. You are most deserving and I offer sincere congratulations. Thank you for all the ways you have enriched Pope John Paul II High School. I am happy for you and your families and I am proud of you, too. Please allow me to share a few brief remarks.

I’m Facebook friends with the Dalai Lama. Well, okay, more accurately I like the Dalai Lama, along with 2.2 million other Facebookers. I don’t think he’s following me though. The Dalai Lama is, of course, the enormously influential Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader well known for his ways of compassion and wisdom -- and is a past winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. It’s his most recent status update that has me thinking about today’s induction and what it means to be fully who we are.

This is what he writes: “My hope and wish is that one day, formal education will pay attention to what I call “education of the heart.” Just as we take for granted the need to acquire proficiency in the basic academic subjects, I am hopeful that a time will come when we can take it for granted that students will learn, as part of the curriculum, the indispensability of inner values: love, compassion, justice, and forgiveness.”

Certainly we are in the business of formal education and proficiency in academic pursuits. In fact, we acknowledge and honor today students who have excelled in such study. Academic excellence and success in formal education is not easy, it requires hard work, and for their achievement today’s inductees are to be congratulated.

In an increasingly competitive and uncertain world, one vision of what we enshrine today is winning the game, securing promotion, and the appearance of a more secure future. But true education, formal academic education and education of the heart, requires these inner values the Dalai Lama cites – love, compassion, justice, forgiveness. I’ve been thinking recently about what it really mean to live in love, compassion, justice and forgiveness and I’m more convinced than ever that this way – the way of Jesus and His mother, incidentally – is true education and the key to resolving what we fear and of healing what ails us. It is time to take seriously love, compassion, justice and forgiveness. You need it. So do I. So do your families. So does our school. Our nation. Our world.

So as we rightly honor those soon to be inducted today, we set our sights on excellence in formal education and academic pursuits to be sure, and let us also practice the inner virtues so necessary for real transformation -- of our own lives, those around us, our school, and the world in which we live.