

August 31, 2018

Dear parents,

**“We are meant to accompany each other, as Jesus accompanies us. We carry each other. We urge each other. We encourage each other.”**

Kerry Weber  
Taken from *Beautiful Mercy*

No one would argue with me about this quote. As caring Catholics, this is a fundamental belief and a clear expectation if we are truly living a faith-filled life. It's easy to throw out there, but how easy is it to actually put into practice each and every day? **We carry each other.** I can see evidence of this in the halls when one student physically carries the books for the other student on crutches. I see it when students rearrange their lunchroom seats so that no one is isolated or excluded. I can see it when an experienced teacher helps a new teacher with a lesson. In the classroom, we might ask students how they can be kind to each other. They are quick to share ideas and give examples: pick up pencils when a friend drops them, pass out papers, be helpful without being asked. Here's the catch: is it enough to carry each other when it's convenient? How do I carry the classmate/carpool friend that drives me crazy? Do I have to carry someone even when I myself am exhausted? Do I allow others to carry me or do I hold on tightly to the control I think I have in any situation and insist on doing everything myself, my way? Here's your "best version of yourself" homework. Think about your past week and look ahead to the week to come. Who have you carried? Who has carried you? Did you recognize a call to holiness in the carrying?

**We urge each other.** I think urge is a great word, much better than nag. Nagging has a negative connotation while urging seems more positive and hopeful. Here's the plan you're expected (urged) to follow but you have the choice of whether you do it or not; but with choice, comes consequence. I can urge parents every day to drive slowly on Mt. Mercy. It's your choice and it's your ticket if you choose poorly. Here are the Ten Commandments and we are urged to follow them with a powerful consequence either way. Do our actions reflect what Jesus urges us to do? Have you been urged or urged someone else in the right or wrong direction? Is the Holy Spirit urging you to answer a call to holiness even if it's not on your Google Calendar?

Our all school work in the area of growth mindset embodies the idea that **we encourage each other.** We all have our own individual areas of strength/comfort and areas that are uncomfortable or just plain hard. It is so easy to join the bandwagon of complaining. Fight it! Instead of complaining, find a way to encourage the change you desire. Cling to a positive approach. I've heard teachers, parents, coaches, and classmates capitalize on the phrase, "You can do it!" That's the easy way to encourage. There is nothing at all wrong with verbally encouraging others. My challenge for you is to lead a life that encourages others by your example. Case in point: on the first day of school, a teacher asked the class to write down five things that make you smile. Students were asked to share their ideas and hands quickly flew into the air. Among the regular answers of friends, family, puppies, and ice cream was a gem that

knocked my socks off when I was told about it at the end of the day. One student said, “I grin when I see Mrs. Hayslip smile.” Makes me mushy just writing it. We all have days when it is hard to smile. That boy’s simple, honest answer still encourages me weeks later and will continue to do so far into the future. My own homework has been to find other ways to encourage students and staff without saying a word. Attempting to answer my own call to holiness encourages me and therefore, encourages others. I encourage you to join us on our journey, our pilgrimage to heaven as Fr. John called it during our opening Mass. The trip will be so much better if we carry, urge, and encourage each other. It’s never too late to begin.



Enjoy your long weekend,

*Mrs. Hayslip*