



Apostles or Disciples and Our Catholic Identity

The terms are used interchangeably, but in truth have different meanings. Recently Pope Francis and Archbishop Blair have encouraged the Catholic population and Catholic school students in particular to engender discipleship in Christ.

This is not only a challenge to students but an even greater challenge to our Catholic school leaders – administrations and faculties – who impact our students daily. Our call is to embrace the story of Jesus, his life, his teachings, the person and the divinity of Jesus and then to make ‘disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit’. We realize the role a strong Catholic identity in our schools plays in this process, but the huge challenge remains as to how we create Catholic identity in our schools.

I offer a suggestion to administrators and teachers. Become familiar with The Catholic Intellectual Tradition; devotion to the Saints and observance of religious feast days, understanding scripture, the Sacraments, the role of Holy Men and Women, liturgy, the impact of music, art, science, and architecture from the monks and religious on our history, and the impact of Catholic Social Teaching on our families and society. All of these pieces of the Intellectual Tradition provide a rich backdrop for forming students in a life centered in Christ, and robustly enliven the Catholic school experience for future disciples.

Jesus told the disciples “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). The word apostle is from the Greek word “apostolos” and means “a delegate, messenger,” and “one sent forth with orders”. In Acts 1:8 Jesus assures the apostles that they “will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Not only does Jesus give them the authority to go out in His name, He also says that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit and they are then to go to the ends of the earth (sent out) to be His witnesses. (www.patheos.com)



What makes up the Catholic Intellectual Tradition?

