

## Statement of Philosophy of Education

I love mathematics. And I love teaching.

For me, mathematics is an art. The art of structures, human thinking and creativity. I believe that God is especially revealed in the mystery of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, being able to think and to create.

It is easy to lose sight of the elegance in the midst of technical details, especially when aesthetics, motivation, and simplicity – the core values of mathematics – are absent from typical math courses. However, I am convinced that Mathematics begins by playing... with games, puzzles, patterns, shapes, numbers, structures, rules, and ideas. From there, you observe and ask questions. Owning your question leads to the rest: refinement, searching for solutions, discovering the connections that allow you to not just solve but understand your problem, and finally, rigorous writing and presentation of your solution.

Mathematical thinking is crucial, as it can lead to growing ability to reason reflectively, logically, and critically. With the Western World largely dismissing religion as irrelevant and divisive, and distorted media stereotypes painting faith as reactionary and anti-intellectual, in a world where people tend to take things for granted, we need a good deal of critical thinking and a clear, measured, and respectful picture of the Christian faith and the way it can impact all of life for the good.

I do agree with Einstein who said that education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school. Especially in the age of information, any competent student can either look up or re-derive the formulas of our science. What is more important, is having students learn and internalize the methods and concepts of mathematics. Being able to understand the basic concepts, how they are related to the real world, and grasping the concepts behind the formulas are the essentials of the undergraduate education.

I see the role of the teacher in general as a servant of the students, alert to detect special gifts or special difficulties, personally concerned, and assisting in the development of the inner potential of each individual student. I believe that teachers should be more than academic guides. They are involved in the lives of the students, taking a personal interest in the intellectual, affective, moral and spiritual development of every student, helping each one to develop a sense of self-worth and to become a responsible individual within the community. While they respect the privacy of students, they are ready to listen to their cares and concerns about the meaning of life, to share their joys and sorrows, to help them with personal growth and interpersonal relationships. They guide students in their development of a set of values leading to life decisions that go beyond self and that include a concern for the needs of others. They also try to live in a way that offers an example to the students, and they are willing to share their own life experiences.

The learning environment I try to create is safe and stimulating, one in which all can live and work together in understanding and love, with respect for all men and women as children of God. An atmosphere, where all questions are asked, and students feel comfortable coming to me for assistance. I try to instil a joy in learning and a desire to learn that will remain beyond the days in school, since I know, education is a life-long process. I always try to see the class from the student's perspective by repeatedly reminding myself of the challenges involved in learning. I believe that students not only have to accept their gifts and develop them, but they should also accept limitations and overcome these as far as possible. Coming from a non-academic family, I always had to find my own ways. I have learnt that one has to work hard for achieving goals. I am well aware that achieving mastery of a concept needs time and effort, but the experience to understand something and being able to create new concepts worth the price indeed. That is why I always emphasise and support the thoughtfulness required in the learning process and not the immediate outcome.

The school I dream about should be about improvement in living and learning for the greater glory of God and the common good. It should be a place where people are believed in, honoured and cared for; where natural talents and creative abilities are recognised and celebrated; where individual contributions and accomplishments are appreciated; where everyone is treated fairly and justly; where each of us finds the challenge, encouragement and support we need to reach our fullest individual potential for excellence; where we help one another and work together with enthusiasm and generosity, attempting to model concretely in word and action the ideals we uphold.

Education for me is preparation for life, which is itself a preparation for eternal life. Based on the example of Christ, and reflecting on today's culture in the light of the teachings, I believe that we must promote a spiritual vision of the world in the face of materialism; a concern for others in the face of egoism and simplicity in the face of consumerism.

I have no doubt that in education, the criterion of excellence should be applied to all areas of school life, nevertheless, the pursuit of academic excellence can be applied only within the larger context of human excellence. Good education cares for the person as a whole - mind and heart, body and soul and gives to the development of the imaginative, the affective, and the creative dimensions of each student to help young men and women become competent, compassionate and committed persons.

## Statement of Faith

As a Christian, I commit myself to live my life finding God in all things and helping others to do the same. I believe that the personal encounter with God as a loving Father and Christ as friend and guide, and experiencing His unconditional love and presence in our everyday life should be at the heart of our mission. I know that He is not only present in our lives but also can be discovered through Scripture, personal and communal prayer, in play and work, in other persons and in the whole created world.

I also believe that God is especially revealed in the mystery of the human person, 'created in the image and likeness of God,' and that each man or woman is personally known and loved by God. He is for me Alpha and Omega, source of all life, freedom, peace, hope, beauty and love. I am convinced that we are all called to know and "love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind".

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