

The importance of serving others

“To be a Christian is to do what Jesus did - serve.”

The words of Pope Francis highlight what it means to live out the faith in a world that promotes self-centeredness.

Apart from the simple actions that are second nature to us, there are greater actions that have a significant impact on the community – and that can be seen here at Saint Joseph.

Students must attain a certain number of hours of service each year. Our service should not be looked upon merely as a requirement, but more so a humble gift given from a heart of gratitude.

Our service requirement is not for a higher social status among other schools, or as the Pontiff puts it, not a “bit of makeup on the soul” to make it appear more beautiful.

The service we do is a commitment to our community and to God, a living out of the teachings of Jesus and a humble offering for the salvation that is given freely to us.

This commitment to service can be seen by many students who go above and beyond the service requirement for our school, proving that there are young people out there who understand the importance of lending a hand to your fellow man.

Some say that the personal gain from serving others is just as great as the impact made upon the one receiving the service. And perhaps this is why so many students each year surpass the required 30-hour mark.

But if personal gain is the motivator for the service being done, does that have an effect on the authenticity of the act?

We don't think it does. We believe it is already pretty remarkable that students are devoting their time to the service of others, and credit our school for giving us that opportunity.

Service is extremely rewarding and it should not be looked upon as a burden. We are each called to use our gifts at the service of others. And it is important that a high school instills in its students a willingness to serve at a young age, for the future of society is in our hands.

Service hours are just another dimension of how Saint Joseph aims to transform its students into honorable citizens.

Michelangelo said: “Every block of stone has a statue inside of it, and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”

Our school itself is a sculptor, taking young people and shaping them into men and women who often say that service hours are partly responsible for their respective transformations.

The services performed by many at our school have the ability to influence hundreds if not thousands of people.

This tradition of excellence and service will continue to thrive and hopefully spread throughout our tightly woven, Catholic community for many years to come.