

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On June 7, Little Flower School celebrated its sixty seventh graduation; 27 students received their diplomas. It was a glorious celebration for the graduates, their families and our parish.

In the Gospel chosen for the Mass, Jesus calls each of the graduates to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Mk 5:13-16). In these challenging days, I am thrilled to see these well-formed children go forward into the world and be a source of clear moral vision and effective action. I call this class of 2022 a community of salt and light.

These children know that they are called to reach out to the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized and the vulnerable in concrete acts of charity. They understand that since our Church teaches an option for the poor that they must reflect that option in charitable works.

Importantly, these children also know that Catholic teaching calls them to change the structures that deny people their dignity and rights as children of God. Social justice actions remove root causes of injustice and improve societal structures.

Charitable works and social justice are opposite sides of the same coin. The bishops of the U.S. use the term “two feet of love in action.” The bishops affirmed the necessity of both feet of love in action in their 1993 document *Communities of Salt and Light*. They wrote: “Service and action, charity and justice are complementary components of parish social ministry. Neither alone is sufficient; both are essential signs of the gospel at work.”

Young people today give me tremendous hope. At Catholic Charities, I am blessed to work side-by-side with many young volunteers who refuse to join the polarized world of the adults. I see young adults using their talents, the resources of their faith and the opportunities of our great democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person.

Congratulations to all 2022 graduates! I wish you the very best. Thank you for being anchors of hope.

Peace and all good,

Deacon Jim