



December 20, 2019

Dear Cardinal Gibbons Community,

My heart is filled with joy as I write to you to express the profound gratitude I feel for the opportunity to serve as your Head of School. It is an honor to become a part of such a vibrant, creative, and mission-driven Catholic school. As soon as I walked into the school building last month, brightly lit and lively on a Sunday night—the closing performance of *Noises Off*—I was struck by the energy and commitment of every constituent, from board member to cast and crew to educator to parent. From that moment forward, every aspect of my visit confirmed that Gibbons thrives because of its warm, welcoming people. You know who you are—and who you want to be. In my experience, such a deeply rooted sense of Catholic identity and mission is rare. You have so much to celebrate at Gibbons, and I am both humbled and invigorated by the chance to work with all of you.

I am also moved by the commitment to Gibbons that I witnessed in Bishop Zarama, Superintendent Mike Fedewa, and Board Chair Tim Thronson as well as the other members of the Board of Trustees and the Search Committee. I was equally impressed by the leadership of Ms. Nancy Barkan, who, in her role as Interim Principal, has led with wisdom, compassion, and heart. Ms. Barkan, Mr. Mike Rogosich, and Mr. Mike Curatolo are nothing short of a dream team, and they have individually and collectively positioned the school for success. Anyone can see that Cardinal Gibbons is poised for its next steps forward as a Catholic institution. A clear vision defined by thoughtful leaders and executed by top-notch educators guides the way.

What also guides the way is that students and their families are at the center of Gibbons. It is a testament to the work you do every day that, even during our brief visit, the students provided some of the most memorable moments for my wife, Kim, and me. The students we met shared their passion for Gibbons with us and spoke compellingly about their own academic and spiritual journeys. They care deeply about their school and want it to be the best that it can be. As the product of an all-boys Jesuit high school in St. Louis, an institution that I credit with giving me a meaningful foundation in academics and spirituality, I know how they feel and will do everything in my power to serve them well.

The school has experienced such great success in the classroom, on the athletic fields, in the arts, and in the area of service. I hope and pray that I can continue this legacy and, with you, work to strengthen it. I cannot wait to get to know you all! I will be on campus a few times during the spring semester before we move in June, and I look forward to meeting you and learning about what brought you to this work and this school.

On behalf of my wife, Kim, as well as our daughters, Charlotte and Mia, I want you to know how excited we are to be building a life in Raleigh and within the Cardinal Gibbons community. We feel so blessed to be fellow Crusaders!

Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful Christmas and all the blessings of the season.

With gratitude,

Jeff Bell