

## FROM THE HEADMASTER: THEME FOR THE YEAR 2019-2020

**“You are precious in my eyes”**



*“Have a great heart. Do not be afraid to dream big things.”*

My wife wrote these encouraging words of Pope Francis on a post-it note and stuck it on my desk at home earlier this summer. While she was trying to lift my spirits, which she certainly did, my thoughts quickly turned to our students at St. Joseph's. Isn't this what we want for our sons and daughters: for our students to have great hearts that dream of big things? But what makes this possible? Experience has taught me that just wishing for a great heart does not make it so. To move our hearts, we need someone who believes in us, someone whose gaze says: "You are precious in my eyes." I had read that quote from Pope Francis before, but it wasn't until my wife gave it to me (with all the love that I know she has for me) that it started to expand my heart.

We all need someone to look at us with unconditional love in order for us to thrive. This is especially true for young people, which is why I have chosen "**You are precious in my eyes**" for this year's theme. These words were originally addressed to the people of Israel who were in exile from the Promised Land due to their idolatry and infidelity to God's covenant. In one of the more consoling sections of the entire Bible (chapters 40 through 66 of the book of Isaiah), the prophet Isaiah sets out to reassure his people of God's fidelity and love despite their unfaithfulness. Isaiah goes so far as to prophesy that God will send His son to save His people through His redemptive suffering (Isaiah 52-53), proving that we are indeed precious in God's eyes! My hope and prayer for your sons and daughters this year is that they will each be looked upon in a way that communicates that they are precious in God's eyes.

The artwork I have chosen alongside of the theme for the year is the 17th century masterwork by Murillo, **The Holy Family with a Bird**. I chose this painting because of the serene, loving gaze on the faces of each member of the Holy Family as Mary and Joseph watch Jesus' delight in playing with a bird and a dog. This painting is unique for its time in that St. Joseph is given center stage. May this image and theme be a constant reminder that we are indeed precious in God's eyes, and may He grant us the grace to have this gaze on one another and especially on our students this year.

Sincerely,

Keith F. Kiser  
Headmaster