

October 24, 2024

Dear Cristo Rey Community,

There are few constants from our early days at 5218 N. Broad Street here at 1717 W. Allegheny Avenue, but one of those constants upon which we could always rely is the smiling face of Dr. Flannery O'Connor — or “Dr. O” as our students affectionately call her. Flannery was a key member of the Founding Team of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School. She worked closely with Founding President John McConnell to conduct the Feasibility Study to determine if a Cristo Rey High School, with all of its unique characteristics, would work in our city. Thirteen years and over 900 graduates later, *The School That Works* is clearly working! Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School exemplifies the power of our community uniting to transform the status quo by investing in our children and future workforce. This commitment began with a few visionaries, including Flannery, whose *Outrageously Bold Hope* inspired the rest of us to follow.

We are grateful for many things, but we are most inspired by the dedication of Flannery over the years. Recruiting prospective families as our founding Admissions Director, educating our students as a teacher, and inspiring our community over the last six years as Principal, Flannery has transcended the Jesuit mission of being a woman for others.

Recently, Flannery shared with our Blue Pride community that at the end of this school year she will be stepping away from Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School to spend more time with her young family and pursue new career options. There are no words that communicate the gratitude that we have for Flannery's overwhelming dedication to our mission and our students. Rest assured, we will talk more about saying goodbye to Dr. O later this year to thank her for her incredible dedication to Cristo Rey.

Below is the message she shared with our community and I'd like to pass it along to you.



Tom Shoemaker
President & CEO
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School



Every day I get to walk into our doors at 1717 Allegheny and love the work I do. I get to walk alongside our students in their educational, spiritual, and developmental journey. I get to work with a committed team who are all focused on nurturing and challenging students to help them reach their goals.

I know that there is no better job, no better community, than this and I thank you for entrusting Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School with your students' education.

In the spirit of gratitude and openness, I write to share this news with you. After much prayer and discernment, I have decided that this academic school year will be my last year as the Principal of Cristo Rey Philadelphia.

After this year, Cristo Rey's next principal will have the great privilege and responsibility to lead our school. The search for this person will begin in the next couple of weeks. I want you to know that my focus, and our team's focus, remains on the important work ahead of us this year. We will continue on a path with high expectations and high support for all of our students. We know this is how we will deliver success for our community. It always has been and it always will be. Thank you for your partnership. Our good and important work continues.

It has been an absolute honor to serve the Cristo Rey community over the past 13 years; a community that will always be a part of me.

Let's Go Blue Pride.

Dr. Flannery O'Connor





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