Episcopal Schools Celebration 2011-2012: Meditation

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We live in a world and dwell in a culture that is bent on self-promotion. Whether it be on Facebook, Twitter, or in the emphasis we place on the need to tell our own story, so much of what our young people (and not a few adults!) envision life to be about has to do with getting ourselves in front of an audience, being seen, posting photos, sharing all aspects of our lives with those willing or not so willing to look or listen. The cry goes out from so many, “Notice me.” When hearing the phrase, “Let the whole world see and know,” many might well assume that it has to do with the world seeing and knowing about us!

As is so often the case, God’s way of seeing and knowing is something quite different. The seeing and knowing referred to here—a phrase taken from one of the great collects of the Prayer Book, used on Good Friday, the Great Vigil of Easter, and at ordination services—has to do indeed with the process of being noticed, but noticed in the context of transformation. It has to do with what God wants for the whole world, and with all things through the power of God becoming new.

It is important to remember that this need to be noticed, to be seen and known, stems from something very deep within all human beings, namely, the yearning to be something more than we are. We dream of greater things, hoping that at some point we will arrive at a point where we are not overlooked, dismissed, or trivialized. While modern technology draws upon this human need in a great way, it is far from being just a contemporary yearning.

In her book, Speaking of Faith, Krista Tippett (who will be the keynote speaker at our Biennial Conference 2012), reflects on the role that faith played in her childhood, saying, “Faith helped me live with the smallness of the world around me and my intense inner sense of a larger beyond.” God touches that deep need within us and can help move us beyond the smallness of the world.

The theme of our Episcopal Schools Celebration reminds us that God is always seeking to transform humanity, to take that yearning to be something more and join it with the power of God to transform. God not only notices us but invites us to a new level of being, making all things new and taking that which was cast down and raising it up.
This process of transformation is one that we undertake every day in Episcopal schools. We are engaged in the process of changing lives—students, faculty, staff, parents—in a manner that is lasting and redemptive. Through chapel, the classroom, the athletic field, the theater, conferences with parents, meetings amongst faculty, service opportunities, Episcopal schools offer a different way of noticing, one that speaks both to the best in us and the dream God has for us.

Whether it is God’s transformative power in our lives, or the transformations that take place in the lives of those who are part of an Episcopal school community, in many ways these are well kept secrets in our culture today. “Let the whole world see and know” is not only a hope, it is also a challenge for all of us to offer a truer and more sustaining way of noticing to our culture, one that is truly reflective of what happens each day in an Episcopal school.

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For resources and more information about Episcopal Schools Celebration, visit www.episcopalschools.org/celebration/.

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