

Dear School families,

You know, we are so blessed to have a bookstore here at Holy Spirit, along with Shawnie and a very able and dedicated staff which always goes the extra mile to provide this service to our community and beyond. I like to peruse what's on the shelves and very often I find books that end up being part of my homilies. I'd like to tell you about two of them. The first one is by a Frenchman named Alexandre Harvard. He claims to have had a vision of St. Joan of Arc which inspired him to leave his profession as a lawyer and start a new organization called *The Virtuous Leadership Institute*. The book it's called *Coached by Joan of Arc* and is based on quotes from Joan that came from her two trials. The one that condemned her to death, and the one that exonerated her 20 years later and paved the way for her sainthood.

For those of us who are leaders or who anticipate being leaders someday, I think this small book provides some very interesting encouragement. Joan heard spiritual voices that began in her childhood which guided her toward her mission of liberating France from the English. In her experiences, she got much resistance from just about everybody, including those who should have been her biggest supporters. Nobody believed her competence. How could a young illiterate farm girl with no military training or experience be trusted to make big decisions on the battlefield? She prevailed over them and in the end she was victorious, France was liberated, and she was rewarded by being burned at the stake. (As they say, *No good deed goes unpunished*. If you want to be a leader, be prepared for martyrdom.)

There were some interesting chapters that caught my eye. Among them being chapter 1 which was titled: *Finding victory in defeat*.

Or 7: *Put your intelligence into everything you do*.

Or 14: *Do not fear public opinion*.

Or 15: *Reject perfectionism*.

I personally think this is a good book to give away as a gift to young people as they begin a life which might someday call them to center stage and the role of leadership.

I told you there would be two books but I'm going to hold off on the next one until next week. I will, however, tell you what it's about. It's about humility. *Humility Rules. Saint Benedict's 12-Step Guide to Genuine Self-Esteem*. It's written by a Benedictine monk from St. Louis. But, I'll give you a teaser here. Its about step 4, which is titled, interestingly, "Suffer Fools Gladly".

PERSEVERANCE, with a quote from Saint Matthew:

*"Be patient in suffering, even when you encounter difficulties and injustice, for as the scripture says; he who endures to the end will be saved. (Mt. 10:22)*

~Fr. John