

September 21, 2020
Feast of St. Matthew

Dear People of Christ the King Catholic Church,

We are in the 5th year of the unique project of Catholic Montessori education at Christ the King. What joyful and trying years these have been! In this time, we have seen the culture of the school renewed, enrollment nearly double, and above all, the excitement of seeking holiness enkindled in the hearts of so many children.

We come bearing exciting news for our school and the Catholic Montessori world! Bishop David Kagan, on Oct. 1, 2020, the feast of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, will establish a Public Association of the Faithful in view of becoming a religious institute of diocesan rite. The Public Association will be dedicated to contemplative prayer and Catholic Montessori education. A simpler way to say this, our Bishop is establishing a religious order for Catholic Montessori education.

At Christ the King, we are blessed to see the seeds of Maria Montessori's desire for a religious order dedicated to her work being actualized in our midst. The name she proposed for such a work is the *Servants of the Children of Light*. The Public Association will take this name. The foundress and first member of the *Servants of the Children of Light* will be our catechist, Julie Jacobson.

Religious orders are distinguished by several essential characteristics. Namely, a distinctive charism (gift of the Holy Spirit); profession of the evangelical councils of poverty, chastity and obedience; a specific apostolate and form of contemplative prayer; a rule of life; a distinctive religious habit; and life lived in community. The charism of the *Servants of the Children of Light* is to renew the earthly City of God by serving Christ in the child in humility and weakness so that the darkness of the world may be scattered by the Light of the New Jerusalem (Is. 9, Is. 60, Rev. 11, Ps. 52). Drawing from the rich spiritual heritage of the Benedictines, the members of the association will live a life of contemplative prayer, as well as engaging in apostolic activity in the area of Catholic Montessori education.

Miss Jacobson will be receiving the religious habit at the hands of the Bishop in a ceremony at Christ the King on Oct. 1 at 1:30pm. From that time, she will wear the religious habit and take a new religious name. The children of the school will be invited to take part in this special moment. If you would like to attend, please contact the office. Sadly, because of the limitations imposed by COVID-19, we will not have a great capacity to welcome extra guests. We are exploring options to live stream the ceremony.

Thank you for your prayers for this new work! Starting a religious order is a daunting task, and one that is certainly beyond human capacity. With God, though, all things are possible. God bless you!

In Christ,
Fr. Nick Schneider
Julie Jacobson