

# Merry Christmas!

## From the students of St. Anthony's



*"Let's go to Bethlehem!"*

*It's wonderful how a seemingly simple phrase in the Gospel can stop and make you think. The words of the shepherds after the angels appeared to them caught my heart this year. They heard the angelic message and wanted to go and witness for themselves its truth, meaning and consequences. We don't hear much about the shepherds after that except "they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished" Lk 2:17. I wonder what happened to all those who heard the message and saw its reality.*

*Pondering the angels' message, I couldn't help thinking of our St. Anthony graduates who have moved on to high school and out into the big wide world. Had they heard the message we had shepherded to them? Have they experienced for themselves the reality of the angels' message? Have they spread the word to those whom they have met along the journey? The message received by a few simple shepherds spread to millions and transformed the world. It is not so loud in our age, and perhaps we will only ever re-encounter a few of those who have passed through our campus. But from those we do meet again, the news is always hopeful and positive. I see our students advancing in life, challenging the world in which they find themselves and bringing light and peace to those with whom they interact.*

*As with those first shepherds and their listeners, we don't know what the outcome will be for our students. We only know that we prepare them academically for life's challenges and pass on the angels' message of "Peace and Goodwill" towards all people. When we meet our graduates we soon see that the message has taken root and in them we see it flourish.*

*It's really not for us to see the outcome, although we hope and pray that it is successful. It is for us to sow the seeds, nourish and tend the young seedlings and let them flourish and bear witness to the wonder of life in God. They come to us, hear the good news and leave to find its value and reality for themselves. As a bishop in the barrios of Ecuador once told me: "we must show them there is another better way." When I encounter our graduates, I know that we do just that.*

*The Bethlehem which Joseph and Mary entered was little more than a way station for travelers, but from the humble stable the word went out to renew the world. From our equally humble campus, we continue that message of hope, joy, peace and goodwill. Thank you for being fellow messengers and enabling us to transform the world of our young students. I pray that the peace which the Christ Child brought to those first messengers and brings to us at St. Anthony's will be yours this Christmas season and always. "Let's go to Bethlehem" together.*

*Sincerely,  
Fr. Pat*

