

St John Neumann

Born: March 28, 1811

Died: January 5, 1860

Feast day: January 5

Fatherhood is a subject that is highly lampooned by secular society. There are numerous films and T.V. shows where a father is depicted as a dimwit or as abusive. Essentially fathers are the reason there are so many problems in the world. That is the message which the world wants to communicate. We as Catholics know better than this. We know, as we look to our Heavenly Father, that a father deeply cares for his children, wanting them to grow and be competent enough to be able to confront the world around them. We know that this requires, in part, a good education and by this, I do not mean only learning how to read, write, do arithmetic, etc. What I mean by this, is that a child develops a consciousness that is capable of knowing what is good and what is evil. What good is it for a child to know how to do calculus if that child does not know how to seek out the highest good?

St. John Neumann is a wonderful example of fatherhood in this regard. During his life, there were many different immigration groups coming into the United States and he endeavored to learn the languages of many of these groups so that he could be effective at communicating the truths of the faith. He is also the founder of the first Catholic school system in the United States which sought to teach children those same truths of the faith.

We are blessed here at Ave Maria to have a wonderful Catholic school which helps to form young men and women not only to have those skills which they will need in the secular world but also how to seek God and His will for them in their lives. It is especially important that children receive a good Catholic education today for unlike public schools in the days of St. John Neumann, public schools today have completely lost the true notion of good and evil. We see this in the teachings on morality and the attempts to convince children that there is no such thing as an objective reality which we can know. Truth has become whatever you want it to be in the secular world. We used to say that there is a difference between an opinion and a fact but even that statement loses all meaning if there is no such thing as objective reality.

I encourage you fathers, seek to enroll your children in a Catholic school and seek for yourselves in your role as father to study the faith more in depth or learn the spiritual traditions of the Church so you can better prepare your children for the challenges which they will certainly face in an increasingly secular and anti-Catholic world. St. John Neumann, pray for us.