

For Immediate Release:

Catholic school's new STEM initiative bridges science and faith

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy to be the first Catholic STEM elementary school in Pierce County

Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Rev. Stephen C. Rowan, has announced that this fall, Visitation Catholic School, Tacoma, will become Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. The pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade school will place an increased emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math across their curriculum. Visitation's transformation is made possible through the support of the Archdiocese of Seattle's Office for Catholic Schools and the Fulcrum Foundation, and with consultation from the University of Notre Dame Center for STEM Education.

A highlight of this new curricular focus will be a state-of-the-art STEM lab, which will provide hands-on learning opportunities that foster inquiry, design, and problem solving. Students will explore disciplinary concepts and practices that will drive the formation of future STEM-literate citizens and professionals, and will do so within a safe, diverse, faith-filled environment that is indicative of Catholic schools.

The Archdiocese's Office for Catholic Schools is using the school's transformation as an opportunity to develop formal criteria and a process for designating Catholic STEM schools in western Washington. According to Fr. Rowan, "Visitation School is adopting an innovative, 21st century curriculum that is aligned with the traditional strengths of a Catholic school. It is a model for integrating faith and reason while preparing students for life. I congratulate them on their initiative."

Visitation is the first Catholic school in the region to emphasize a STEM academic model across its curriculum at all grade levels. "We are extremely excited to begin introducing STEM education to Visitation this fall, and to provide our students with the opportunity to excel in these key disciplines," said Fr. Nicholas Wichert, Visitation pastor. "It connects Catholic classrooms to global issues in a hands-on way."

The school is currently accepting applications for the 2013-14 school year, and tuition assistance is available. For more information about Visitation Stem Academy visit: www.visitationstemacademy.org

Contact:

Thomas Jay, Visitation Principal – jayt@visitationschool.net

Rev. Stephen C. Rowan, Superintendent of Catholic Schools – superintendent@seattlearch.org

Sue Mecham, Interim Executive Director, Fulcrum Foundation – sue.mecham@fulcrumfoundation.org

Matt Kloser, Notre Dame Center for STEM Education – mkloser@nd.edu

Eric Downing, Assistant Director for Marketing, Fulcrum Foundation, eric.downing@seattlearch.org