

## From the Desk of Miss Wilber

January 15, 2021

Oxford Dictionary defines diligence as, “careful and persistent work or effort”. Merriam-Webster defines it as “steady, earnest, and energetic effort” or “devoted and painstaking work and application to accomplish an undertaking”. The Cambridge Dictionary says it’s, “the quality of working carefully and with a lot of effort”. No matter how you put it, it sounds tiring!

I’ll be perfectly honest. As I sit here this Friday afternoon trying to write to you something meaningful, and perhaps even educational or inspiring, I am tired. It’s been a busy week, I’m behind on my grading, I’m not sure I was able to sufficiently explain what a main-sequence star is today, and my schedule for next week has one less work day in it (which maybe is a blessing, but feels more like a challenge to fit 5 days of work into 4). As we approach the end of the second quarter, the classwork is getting harder and the energy we started the school year with is waning. The cold, dark days of January are no help. The truth is I bet what I am experiencing is the same as what the students are experiencing. This is a typical for this time of year. I know this, that’s why I chose DILIGENCE as the virtue for January this year – because I knew we’d need it.

As our energy and motivation falter, we need encouragement to keep going. This is why we pray, this is why we talk about virtue, this is why we speak positive words to our students to help them keep going. Yes, it is hard, but... you can do hard things! I want, more than almost anything, for my students to know this. I want them to not only know that I love them and want the best for them, but I want them to love themselves and want their own best. No, they are not perfect, and they will not always get it right. Yes, they are wonderfully made, and they are called to greatness.

It is perhaps this thirst for greatness that is most needed to fuel diligence. Greatness, our very best, those are hard to achieve, hard even to pursue. It overwhelms me at times, so I take a deep breath and ask, “what’s the next best step?” That stack of papers to grade is too big, just grade one test. The next science unit is too extensive, plan the introductory lesson. The needs of the students are too great, take one need at a time and love them - even when I don’t have the capacity to give them everything they need right now. I want to be a great teacher. I want to have a great influence in the lives of my students. I know that the only way to do that is to be diligent - to keep going even when it’s hard, even when it’s tiring.

I pray this month that the students are driven by a desire to be great, to be the best version of themselves. I pray they recognize the importance of diligence. I pray they receive the support and encouragement they need to press on. I pray they find within themselves the spark they need to keep trying. In the end, it is worth it. May we live in hope that one day we will hear God say, “well done, my good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21)

Sincerely,  
Miss Wilber

*“Better to have the humility to begin great tasks with the danger of failing, than to reduce one’s goal out of pride in order to guarantee success.”*  
- St. Alberto Hurtado