

THE TABLET

A Cristo Rey School Grows in Brooklyn

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Bishop Nichols DiMarzio addresses those gathered to celebrate the rededication of Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School.

stars of the network," he said.

Father Parks said he has great faith in Henson and Jenny Dolan, principal, because he had an opportunity to work with them in Cristo Rey NY.

Bishop DiMarzio shares in Father Parks' enthusiasm. He said he is pleased to see the school thriving because it caters to students who would otherwise not be able to attend a Catholic school due to financial circumstances.

In the Cristo Rey model, each student attends school for an extended day four times a week and interns at a business for one day. During his speech at the dedication, Bishop DiMarzio praised the level of professionalism with which the students present themselves. He said he has had the opportunity to meet the students who come to work for the diocese and The DeSales Media Group, the parent organization of The Tablet.

Nearly every student in the Bushwick school has a paying internship, the salary of which is used to help offset the cost of tuition. This model has been implemented since the school opened a little over three years ago. However, this year, the students are subject to a more rigorous academic schedule.

"Our curriculum is more set," said junior Eric Rivera, who works in ACE group, an insurance company. "We have guidelines that we follow, which correspond to the Cristo Rey Network."

"In school, we are learning educational basics and at work we are getting an employment feel which we would probably not get in any other high school."

Although his days are full, Rivera said he still finds time to socialize, thanks to the time management skills he learned in school. Freshman Ralph Meristil, who works for Ridgewood Savings Bank, said he quickly learned that he is not alone in his new school.

"All the teachers are helpful and there is after-school help," he said.

Lauren Lefty, a religion teacher, said the small size of the student body allows teachers to develop a personal relationship with the students, which allows them to make sure that all students are in good mental health.

"Even though we know they have a lot on their plate, we still have high standards," she said. "We try to make it manageable for them without lowering expectations."

She said one of the expectations of the school is to have a strong religious education. Every grade has religion class every day they are in school.

Robert Catell, chairman of the board of directors of Cristo Rey Brooklyn, said the transformation Cristo Rey Brooklyn has undergone is meant to benefit the students. "Our mission is to give a quality education and work experience so they can have a chance at a successful life and be a contributing part of society."

by Antonina Zielinska

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio went to Lourdes Academy, Bushwick, to officially rededicate it, on Nov. 2, as Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School. Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz also came to congratulate the school as did representatives of the diocese and the Cristo Rey Network.

"The name change is a symbol of more profound changes and opportunities," said Bill Henson, president of the high school. "It reinforces our commitment to the Cristo Rey educational model."

Along with a new name, Cristo Rey started this new school year with a new president, a new principal, and 10 new teachers and support staff at 2 Aberdeen St. The halls of the school have undergone mild renovation. Enrollment has increased from about 150 to 200 students and the school works more closely with the Cristo Rey curriculum.

These changes impressed Father Joe Parks, S.J., president of Cristo Rey NY, and chairman of the board of the Cristo Rey Network, who attended the rededication.

"We think this school is going to take off and be one of the