



DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit

Hi all,

I love zombie stories. Not uncritically or without discretion, but when a zombie story is told well, for me there is nothing better in “genre” storytelling. My love for these stories came late in life. As a kid I hated all of the horror genres, and when *The Walking Dead* was first becoming culturally relevant, I remember cynically rolling my eyes. That all changed about two or three years into the show’s run. For summer vacation, Amy and I were staying with some friends in the “up North” lake region of Michigan. Early one morning, I was flipping through the channels, and I came across an AMC marathon of *The Walking Dead*. Within 15 minutes I was hooked. I probably watched four or five episodes that day, and when we got back home I bought and read all of comics the show used as source material.

As anyone familiar with the genre will tell you, zombie stories are never about the zombies. The monsters can be fast or slow, silly or terrifying. The cause of their mutation can come from bites, or airborne toxic events, or viruses, or fungal infections. These particulars are just hooks, they are not what sustain the genre. When zombie stories work they do so by bringing into high relief an “us/them” dichotomy. Who are we and how are we defined? Who are they and how do we define them? Zombie stories present us with easy answers to these questions. We are the living, they, the walking dead. The best zombie stories force us to grapple with how quickly we place our fellow humans in the “them” category, and how frequently we define “us” as being “not them.”

HBO’s new Sunday night prestige television show places this question in the title and opening episode. *The Last of Us*, based on a video game of the same name, opens with a small family, a father and daughter. When the zombies rise, the “us” is clearly defined as this pair and the father’s brother. In order to protect his “us,” the father remorselessly kills zombies who were once neighbors. Within the first thirty minutes, he is also abandoning those humans who have not become zombies. Throughout the first three episodes, the “us” remains small. It seems to me that the success of the show will depend upon how “us” is redefined and whether or not it expands.

These stories can be appealing because we never stop asking that essential question. It wasn’t until I was a high school student that the definition of “catholic” really meant anything to me. Prior to that point it was simply a proper noun. But since then, I think of it occasionally. Lower “c” catholic means universal. The Catholic Church is the universal Church. In that light, how do we start to see everyone as us; how do we see in them their full human dignity? As long as zombie stories keep prompting me to ask those questions, I’ll keep consuming them.

Pax,

Dominic D’Urso



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Upcoming Events

February 6

Registration: If your child has not submitted the registration for the 2023-24 school year, please have him or her see either their Communio teacher or counselor on Monday. Also, please remember that a \$250 registration fee is due. The students can turn in their fees to their Communio teachers.

February 7

Home Boys Basketball

February 10

Coronation Basketball Game: Our pep rally will be held at 2:00, and will include an introduction of the Coronation court. The game begins at 7:00. The Coronation court will also be introduced during halftime of the game. As usual, all of our families are welcome to attend.

February 11

Coronation Dance: The doors will open at 6:30 with the ceremony starting at 7:00. The dance will follow the ceremony and end at 9:30. Students attending the dance are required to stay until 9:00.

February 13

Schedule Change: The students will not have school on Monday, February 13th. We will use the time for faculty professional development.

February 14

Senior Night: We will honor the seniors on our basketball teams, diamondline, cheer squad, band, and swim team.

February 17

No School for Students: The faculty and staff will attend our annual faculty retreat.

February 20

No School: President's Day.

February 22

No Late Start: The 22nd is Ash Wednesday. We will have a regular start time and an all school mass. As always, all of our families are welcome to attend.