

**Homily by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez**  
**for the Dedication of St. Clare Early Learning Center**  
**Wildlight, Yulee**  
**August 22, 2020**

This is an important day in the life of St. Francis of Assisi Mission – and a day of joy for St. Clare Early Learning Center, and all Catholic schools of our diocese!

Jesus once said, “Let the children come to me.” By blessing this new beautiful building, we are enabling children and their families to draw closer to Jesus in an atmosphere of love. By blessing this school, I celebrate the diocesan vision to one day build an elementary school and parish church here – a sign of my commitment to providing an evangelizing presence in western Nassau County. And possibly a new high school will be built here as well.

This vision echoes the words of Paul to the Corinthians: We laid today a foundation, and others will continue to build and expand on it! But let us all be assured that it is the living God who inspires us and our great stewards and benefactors to do it right for the glory of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

We dedicate this building today, the St. Clare Early Learning Center, as an educational community. I like the name St. Clare. It was chosen because of the connection with St Francis of Assisi Mission in Yulee. The movement of Francis of Assisi deeply influenced Clare, so it is fitting that St. Francis has this partnership with the St. Clare Early Learning Center!

The light of Christ will shine as this center truly becomes a community of faith, hope and love. It is a place parents can trust bringing their children as they experience a true family spirit, a real safe and protected environment, a place to play, to enjoy, to make friends, and yes, to begin the necessary skills of learning.

By parents entrusting their children to the faculty and staff of the St Clare Early Learning Center, the family will not be the same. Their children will grow, and their lives will be more joyful, and families will be satisfied that their choice was fruitful.

How fitting it is that this dedication takes place on the feast of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the Queen of Peace – she is the Queen of Heaven. She intercedes on our behalf. It is so sweet to say together: Hail Mary, full of grace...