

WHY IS THIS MAP UPSIDE DOWN?

We have turned this map upside down as a symbol of our school's effort to "Rethink the World" and make it a better place.

Have you ever stopped to consider why maps of the world place the northern hemisphere on the top?

A big part of the reason is that the cartographers (people who make maps) that made the first maps we now commonly used were European. One of the most famous of these was a man named Gerardus Mercator. In 1569 he made a map now known as "The Mercator Map" (Ask your teacher about it!)

Mercator decided to put North at the top. This meant Europe would be in the center and on top of everyone else.

But we know that the earth is a sphere, and a sphere has no real top and bottom! It would be like trying to find the top of a ball! The truth is that this "upside down" map is just as scientifically valid as any other map!

Many of the places in the world with the highest levels of poverty and inequality are found in the southern hemisphere. That is why we now use the term "Global South" instead of the old term of "Third-World."

When we keep the north on the top of the map, it can make some people think and feel that parts of the world in the northern hemisphere are "better" than the southern hemisphere because they are "on top of them." But this is NOT TRUE!

So, our school has turned this map "upside down" because we want to remind people that there are many ways of "looking at the world." As a Catholic school, we want to "rethink the world" to put the needs of those who suffer the most in our human family "on top."