

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

faith *guides*
has a new name!

— Great Lakes Bay — CATHOLIC

ISSUE 1, 2023

*When
faith
meets
service*

**Sacred Heart senior
follows God by
serving others**



SPECIAL REPORT

**Our Catholic Schools:
Nurturing students mind,
body and spirit**

FROM THE BISHOP

**The treasure of a
Christ-centered
education: Celebrating
Our Catholic Schools**

IN THE KNOW

WITH FATHER JOE

**Should we send
our kids to Catholic
school?**





Gethy Imberg/courtesy

Welcome to the newly renamed magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw! We are excited to share with you the first edition of *Great Lakes Bay Catholic*, formerly *FAITH Saginaw*. Although we have a new name, the content will be familiar. We will continue to share inspiring stories of Christian witness, education and catechesis, lifestyle and advice, as well as news and events within each issue.



ERIN LOOBY CARLSON
is editor of *Great Lakes Bay Catholic* magazine and director of communications for the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

Why a new name? We believe the new name more accurately reflects all 11 counties in the geographic region of our diocese. *Great Lakes Bay Catholic* not only refers to the counties that border Lake Huron, but also pays tribute to the broader identity of the State of Michigan as the Great Lakes State.

In addition, we have launched a digital publishing platform, greatlakesbaycatholic.com, to make the stories you read within this magazine easier to share online for evangelization. Please check out the new site and share the stories you read to become a “digital disciple.”

As we prepare for Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 29 to Feb. 3, we are taking an entire issue of this publication to celebrate our Catholic schools, including our students, teachers and families. Our Catholic Schools are Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence. They have a legacy of forming students in faith and developing strong moral character. Students are dedicated to service and social justice and our communities and country have been well served by the contributions of Catholic school graduates over the decades.

If you haven’t before, please consider a Catholic school education for your family, and join us in praying for our Catholic schools, that they may be places of conversion and encounter with Jesus Christ.

Come Holy Spirit!

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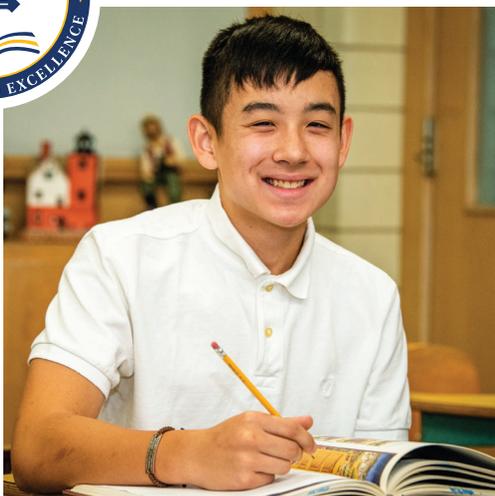
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Sacred Heart senior, Sam Powell will have more than 400 hours of community service by the time he graduates.

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

— Great Lakes Bay —
CATHOLIC

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Volume 17 • Issue 1 • 2023

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Great Lakes Bay Catholic (USPS 024206) is a membership publication of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw, 5800 Weiss St., Saginaw, MI 48603-2762. Published six times a year in January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December. For subscription information, e-mail Subscriptions@dioceseofsaginaw.org. If you have a change of address, please contact your parish. Periodicals postage paid at Saginaw, Mich., or additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Great Lakes Bay Catholic*, 5800 Weiss St., Saginaw, MI 48603-2762. © Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

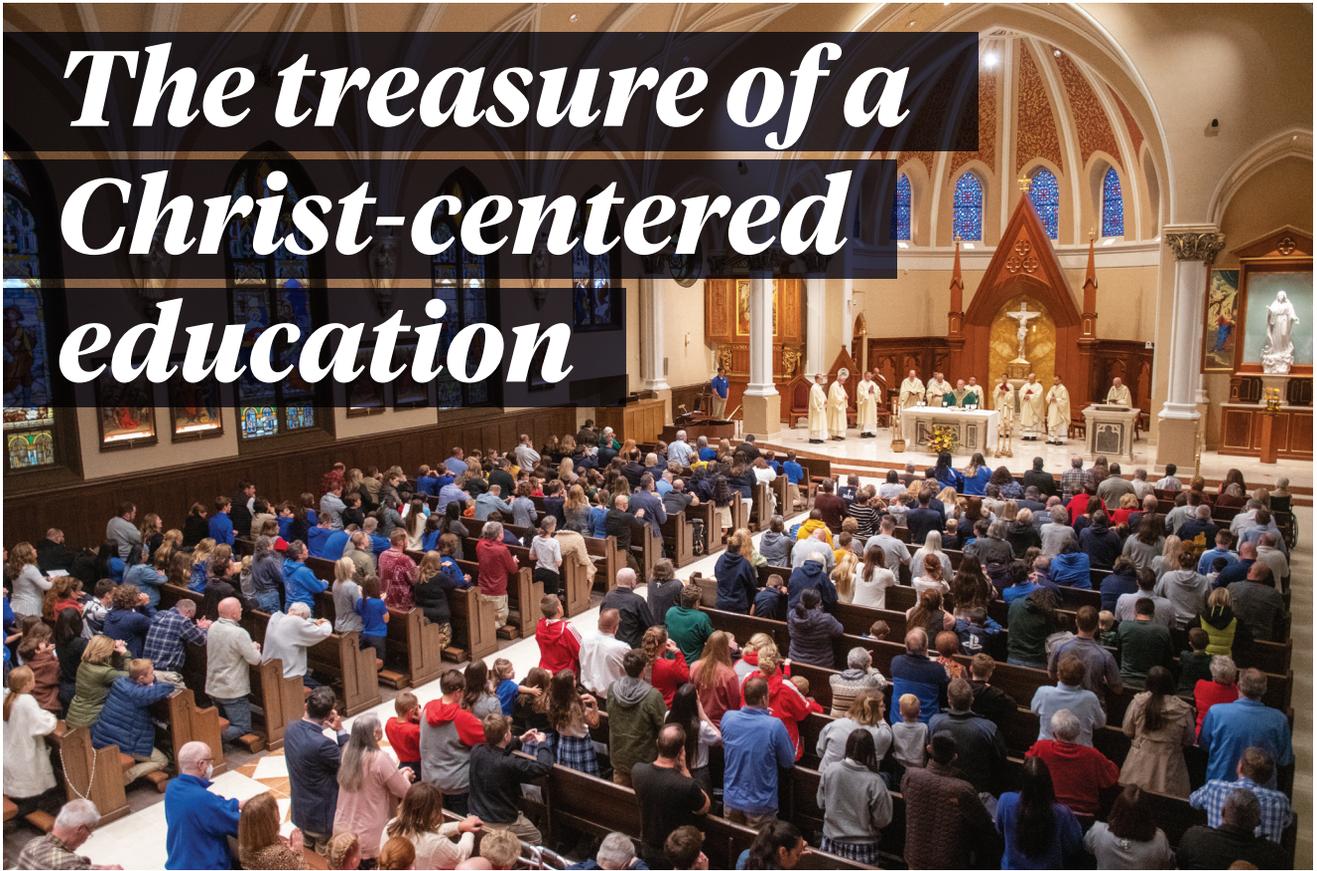
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— Great Lakes Bay —
CATHOLIC

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The treasure of a Christ-centered education



CELEBRATING OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Friends in Christ, One year ago, I shared with you two named priorities in my ministry thus far: Eucharistic Revival and Catholic Schools. In 2023, we continue to pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our efforts.

Faithful from across the Diocese gather at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw for a Back to School Mass with Bishop Gruss on Oct. 9, 2022 to celebrate the long-standing tradition of Catholic school education. *Photo by Jeff Schrier.*

In this first issue of *Great Lakes Bay Catholic*, as we prepare for Catholic Schools Week and begin our enrollment season for the next school year, we celebrate Our Catholic Schools. I am pleased to introduce to you some of

our Catholic school students, teachers and families from across our diocese. I invite you to consider a Catholic school education for your children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews. You will find a listing of Catholic schools

in our diocese inside this issue on page 29 and on our website, saginaw.org/schools. Our building leaders are looking forward to meeting with you to discuss a Christ-centered education for your family.

The value and contributions of Catholic schools to our Church and our nation are well documented. For over a century, Catholic

schools in Saginaw have played a vital role in the life of our parishes and surrounding communities. Nearly two centuries after Father Henri Nouvel, SJ celebrated the first Mass in Saginaw, the first Catholic high school came into existence, St. Mary High School in 1868.

Today, our Diocese has 12 schools, including three high schools in which we educate



THE MOST REV. ROBERT D. GRUSS
is the seventh bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

“It is also my hope and dream that any student in our diocese who wants a Catholic education should be able to have one.”

more than 2,000 children.

In April 2022, we began a new chapter in our history of Catholic education with the launching of Our Catholic Schools: Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence. Through this initiative, it is my hope and dream that we will strengthen and build upon the great work currently being done in our schools, so that our schools will be around for another 150 years and beyond.

It is also my hope and dream that any student in our Diocese who wants a Catholic school education should have one, because as I have said before, ‘I am convinced our Catholic schools remain the optimal setting for educating and forming disciples of Jesus Christ.’

Throughout the Gospels, we always find Jesus teaching his students and us. His overall curriculum lays out a model of living which perfects humanity and gives us fulfillment and happiness in life. This education is at the heart of Catholic schools because it provides and helps students to form Christian virtues which enable them to live a life in Christ and help to build the kingdom of God.

A faith connected to salvation is part and parcel of the mission of Catholic Schools. Students are taught the importance of a life of faith and how it must impact their decisions, their choices, and their service to the



Jonathan Rhodus, an eighth grader at All Saints Catholic Middle and High School, receives the Eucharist from Bishop Gruss during the Back to School Mass. Photo by Jeff Schrier.

church and wider community. This begins at home in the family, is further developed through a Catholic school environment, and then outwardly expressed through the lived experience of each student. It is in this way these young people can impact positive and moral change in our society.

Academic knowledge alone is not the end goal of the learning experience. Our Church, our culture and our world need living models of faith today, disciples who are formed with the mind and heart of Christ, who are educated and well-rounded in our Catholic faith tradition.

It takes many dedicated people to educate our

Catholic school students.

I extend my deepest gratitude for our school administrators, faculty and staff, past and present, who have sacrificed so much and who are integral to this ministry in our Diocese. My deepest gratitude for our alumni, our many benefactors and our generous volunteers who see the value in our Catholic Schools and support them in many ways.

I do recognize the great challenges faced by our Catholic schools today. Obviously, there are rising costs, downward trends in enrollment over the years and many other factors as well.

At the same time, I am very excited about our future. With our newly formed Catholic

School Council, a strategic plan and two new positions to support the outreach of the Catholic Schools Office – a curriculum and Catholic identity coordinator and a marketing and admissions coordinator – we are poised to face challenges before us head on. I look forward to seeing what the Lord will do for us as we refocus our efforts in creating a new vision for our Catholic Schools.

This work will necessitate the engagement of all of us, schools and parishes partnering together, working on a united front, guided by the Holy Spirit. In doing so, I believe it will lead to renewal in our schools ... with Jesus as the very center. Now that is an exciting future, if you ask me! †



Dear Father Joe:

SHOULD WE SEND OUR KIDS TO CATHOLIC SCHOOL?



Someone told me that, as Catholics, we are supposed to send our kids to Catholic schools. We are wondering if it's really worth the financial struggle; are we obligated to do this?

Students at St. Joseph the Worker Catholic School in Beal City pray in the parish church. Photo by Danielle McGrew Tenbusch.

Thank you for asking this: it's quite the important issue. I've been blessed to serve as a priest for a little more than 17 years, and every assignment I've been given in that time has had a school connected to it. Over the years, I've really come to see that Catholic schools are a great gift God offers us; a gift that we often overlook.

Is Catholic education a sacrifice? Of course. If it's not, you're doing it wrong. Catholic education, for many people, is a great sacrifice.

It's a sacrifice for the teachers who, in my experience, are paid significantly less than their public school counterparts. It's a sacrifice for the parish that the school is tied to, as that parish commits no small amount of its resources toward running, improving and supporting the school. It's a sacrifice for parents who choose to work to come up with the money needed to pay the tuition. It's a sacrifice for the students who often are in

a building that is not as nice as the public school options.

Catholic education always has been and always will be a sacrifice. The question is: is it one you are called to? I'd like to offer you a three- (possibly four-) step process to help you determine whether or not you and your family are called to be a part of a Catholic school.

First (and this is a shocker), you should pray. You personally should pray, and you and your spouse should pray. This prayer should, in my opinion, take the form of a simple question: "God, are you calling us to send our child (children) to a Catholic school?" I remember when I was in seminary, I spoke to a

priest about some of my fears in regard to being a priest. I caught myself articulating what I thought was the core question, "Do I have what it takes to be a priest?" He said something in response to that which changed my life, "Of course you don't have what it takes to be a priest, but that is not the question. The question is 'Are you called to be a priest?'" I've never forgotten the abject power of that simple question. The same principle applies here: are you being called to send your child to a Catholic school? If so, put aside fears and worries and push forward.

A key part of the process of asking God that question is to



FATHER JOE KRUPP

is a former comedy writer who is now a Catholic priest.

🐦 @Joeinblack

listen for the answer. God may give it to you in the quiet of your heart (note: quiet time needed here!), he may give you the answer through the process of finding out if it's possible – who knows how? The key is this: ask the question and listen for the answer.

The next step is to evaluate. Look at your finances and see what you can do and what you can't. Please make sure and note that this is something for which you may be called to sacrifice "wants." My dad and mom always gave us kids the speech about making sure to separate "wants from needs." Look, too, at any special needs your child may have in order to present that information to the school later. Once you have this information ready, head on over to the local Catholic school and set up a time to ask questions and get a tour.

Getting to the school is the next step. Get a tour of the place. Ask your questions. Find out their Mass schedule. Inquire about Adoration and community service. If you know you'll be needing financial assistance, ask direct questions about that. If you know your child will need special programs, ask about that. See if they have a program where you can volunteer at the school (or parish) in exchange for tuition assistance.

I promise I'm telling you the truth: at almost every school I served in, I was shocked at the amount of tuition assistance dollars that went unclaimed. I don't know if its pride, if it's a lack of publicity or there is somehow a lack of need, but I guarantee you that the school has donors who feel a positive debt toward their

Catholic school and want to help others get the blessing of Catholic education that they experienced. Be sure and check this out.

If, after that, you don't feel you have the information you need, you can do a next step and ask to meet with the pastor. Walk him through your decision process thus far and see if he can't pray with you and show you resources/possibilities that the school didn't know about or share with you.

If, in the end, you do these things and come to the conclusion that you cannot "do" Catholic school, what are your choices?

Religious education. Every parish has a Catholic education program: a place where kids are formed in their faith, usually on Sunday or some other day. Be sure and check that out. The reason we have these programs is because some people are simply not called to Catholic school and this is a beautiful way to experience the joy of growing in our faith. Your parish may have a youth group, check that out and see if it doesn't help you.

To be honest, it's hard for me not to use this article to tell you how much I loved and love the experience of being in a Catholic school as a priest. It regularly blows me away to be around employees at the school and parents who scrape and sacrifice so that the kids can grow in love and knowledge of Jesus and the world our Father made. I could write a whole article just about that. You know, as I think about it, I might just do that. Keep watching this space to find out. Enjoy another day in God's presence! †

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Founded the first free Catholic school for girls in the United States

FEAST DAY: JAN. 4

CLAIM TO FAME:

Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was the first native-born North American to be canonized. A convert, she founded the first religious community of women in the United States (the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph), the first free Catholic school for girls in the United States, and also the first Catholic hospital and orphanage in the United States.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT:

When Elizabeth, who had been brought up in a prominent Episcopalian family in New York, converted to Catholicism, she faced religious prejudice not only from Protestants in the community, but also from her own family. They were afraid she would influence others in the family to become Catholic. They were right! Her sisters-in-law Cecilia and Harriet converted.

WHAT MADE HER A SAINT:

Elizabeth overcame many obstacles with unwavering faith. Widowed at 29, with five small children, she trusted in God to show her the divine plan for her life, even though she didn't always know what it was. Unable to succeed in her native New York, she founded her mission in Maryland, a state friendly to Catholics. There, she was able to start a Catholic school and a women's religious order. In her short life, she led her community into many paths of religious service that still exist today, including schools, hospitals and social justice to the poor, who were Jesus personified. She had a strong devotion to the Eucharist, which she shared with others through her writings and her example.

BEST QUOTE:

"Faith lifts the staggering soul on one side, hope supports it on the other, experience says it must be, and love says let it be."

HOW DID SHE DIE?

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton died of tuberculosis at the age of 46.

PRAYER:

Loving God, you graced Elizabeth Ann Seton, enabling her to be a good wife, mother, teacher, and foundress, so that she might give her life in ministry to others. May her example inspire us to be compassionate and selfless in our love for you and for one another. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.



The *joy* of a Catholic school

Father Andy LaFramboise plays tag with students at St. Elizabeth Area Catholic School. Photo by Danielle McGrew Tenbusch.



Our diocese is in the midst of an initiative to strengthen Catholic schools. The theme for the schools is *Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence*. I am pastor of St. Frances Cabrini in Vassar and St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Reese, which has a school educating children in preschool through eighth grade. I'd like to share three joys I have in being pastor of a Catholic school.

First, the joy of prayer.

I love offering Mass for the students, blessing their sacramentals or joining them in prayer. I find myself preaching to these children like I would talk to my many nieces and nephews. It is a joy offering Mass with young people. It makes me feel younger, and it reminds me that priests are true fathers, seeking to impart spiritual life in the people of God.

Second, the joy of learning.

I love teaching simple things about the faith to the kids. I talked about the Mass to our sacramental preparation children, and a few days later asked if anyone could remember what the word is when the priest puts his hands over the offerings just before the consecration invoking the Holy Spirit. My face lit up when one of the kids said, "epiclesis."

There is joy in the wonder of learning. Catholic schools enable that spirit of wonder to take place in all subjects, but in a privileged way when it comes to the faith. Our faith is a treasure, but it is buried for many people. The role of a teacher is to help bring the treasure out so that students can be amazed at it. In *Catechesi Tradendae*, On Catechesis in Our Time, St. John Paul II said, "The blossoms, if we may call them that, of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of memory-less catechesis" (55). Catholic school students are blessed to have time and space to learn so that their faith can blossom.

Third, the joy of play.

I love playing and watching sports. Whenever I spend a few minutes at recess playing with the children I feel like I am being renewed by the Lord. Throwing the football around reminds me that I am a child of God. I need to be sure I have play in my life, because the Lord loves to watch his children at play. Every father knows that he cannot be so overwhelmed with work or providing for his family that he neglects to play with his children.

It is all about Jesus. Seeing a child's love for the Eucharist or for prayer, seeing the smile of a child who gets a question right or the joy of children playing on the playground is a reminder that God has blessed us with a beautiful life. When you are around children, things which seemed difficult suddenly are seen in a proper perspective. Children remind us that no matter how old we are, we are God's children.

The secret to holiness is to get younger and younger as we get older and older. In other words, the secret is to grow in our wonder, excitement and absolute dependence and trust on God. We can never do better than Jesus, and Jesus rejoices to receive all from the Father. Thanks to all of you principals, teachers, parents and volunteers who help our Catholic schools continue their mission. God bless you all. †



FATHER ANDY LAFRAMBOISE

is pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Reese and St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Parish in Vassar, and director of priestly vocations. He holds a licentiate in Sacred Theology in Marriage and Family Studies from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family.



Our Catholic Schools:

NURTURING STUDENTS MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Saginaw have a lot to celebrate. Dedicated teachers. Committed parents. Excellent students who consistently score above the national average on standardized tests, are involved in numerous extracurriculars and community service and have the unique opportunity to flourish in smaller classes.

“We are proud to serve more than 2,000 students across our Diocese and partner with their parents and our parishes in their education and formation,” said Superintendent of Catholic Schools Cormac Lynn. “Together, our Catholic schools truly are Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence.”

Our schools are full of stories, full of reasons why families choose Catholic education and full of students who are excited to learn about both their faith and academic subjects.

Great Lakes Bay Catholic is pleased to share a few of these stories and people with readers.

Editor's note: Student and teacher quotes have been edited for clarity.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS,
PLEASE VISIT SAGINAW.ORG/SCHOOLS.

** Would you like to nominate a notable alum to be featured in this magazine or on our website?*

We want to recognize our Catholic school alumni and the impact they are making in their families, parishes and communities.

EMAIL DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH AT
DTENBUSCH@DIOSAG.ORG.



All Saints Catholic

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Spreading good” with Socktober



After seeing a YouTube video titled “How Good Spreads,” All Saints Catholic second grade student Adelaila Costilla was inspired to collect donated socks for those in need. Adelaila and her class, pictured here, and the rest of All Saints Catholic Elementary collected more than 2,000 pairs of socks. *Courtesy photo.*

“ONE VIDEO, ONE COMMENT AND OVER 2,000 SOCKS LATER, WE MADE A DIFFERENCE,” SAID TRISHA HEINTSKILL, A SECOND GRADE TEACHER AT ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BAY CITY.

It all started with the class’s usual morning meeting, which includes a short motivational or inspirational video. One September day, the morning’s video was of the YouTube personality Kid President, played by Robby Novak.

In the video, titled “How Good Spreads,” Kid President encourages viewers to spread kindness and shares the team’s project, Socktober.

“(Kid President) spoke of making a difference and how

little acts of kindness can lead to big things! Socktober was an example, since it is the least donated item to those in need. After the video, Adelaila (Costilla) said, ‘Mrs. Heintskill, can we do that?’ To which I excitedly answered, ‘Yes!’” Trisha said.

They began collecting donations of new socks from students, their families and school supporters. A fourth grade student, Sophia Wiegand, added to the

collection by organizing a sock drive at Bonnie’s Sewing Center.

“The students were so excited about it. All of them in my class immediately said they wanted to do it! They all really got into it and had a ton of fun making a difference,” Trisha said.

Socktober is one of numerous ways All Saints Cougars seek to help others. A November food drive, for example, totaled more than 1,600 food items donated by students.

“(The students) can see how they can make a difference when we work together,” Trisha said.

The thousands of socks

were delivered to the St. James Jail Ministry, the Good Samaritan Rescue Mission and the Bay Area Women’s Center, a domestic violence shelter.

As a Catholic school, All Saints encourages students to live out their faith by loving others like Jesus and practicing works of mercy.

“We regularly talk about living life like Jesus and helping those in need. I think the students are very aware of that, and I think Adelaila reacting to the video and immediately wanting to do something shows exactly that,” Trisha said.

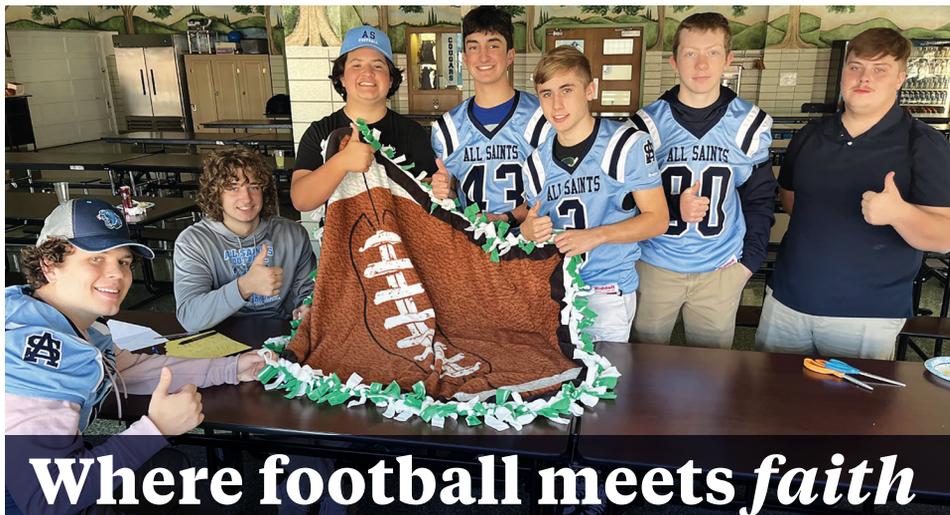
An education steeped in virtue and Catholic values can create space for amazing things.

“We can speak openly about living as God wants us to live and being living examples of Jesus’ teachings,” Trisha said. “It’s amazing to be able to speak openly about our faith and see it make a difference in the children.” †

All Saints Catholic

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

BAY CITY
GRADES: 6-12
989.892.2533



Where football meets faith

BEFORE EACH FOOTBALL GAME, THE ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL COUGARS TAKE TIME TO PRAY TOGETHER.

Oct. 21, however, they prayed not only for their own Cougar family, but also a young man far from Bay City whose story touched their hearts.

Ethan Glynn, a Minnesota freshman, was paralyzed from the shoulders down following a tragic neck and spinal cord injury during his first football game on Sept. 2.

Cathy McDonell, whose son Ryan is a senior on the All Saints Catholic football team, heard about Ethan's story. She thought of her own brother, Brian Sheridan, who sustained a spinal cord injury decades ago. She thought of her son, whose season-ending ACL injury occurred the same week Ethan was paralyzed.

She knew they needed to reach out to Ethan.

"I want him to know that the Bay City All Saints football team were praying for his physical health and for him to remain positive. I want Ethan

to know that his injury is just a detour," she said. "I wanted Ethan and his family to know you can have a great life."

That's why, in the hours before the Cougars took the field, the football team made a prayer blanket for a Minnesota 15-year-old they didn't know but could imagine being on their team. As each player knotted the fleece together, they prayed individually for Ethan.

"Those boys were rushing to the blanket. They were more interested in praying," said Cathy, noting that the players were choosing to work on the blanket before eating the brisket dinner waiting for them. "They all seemed very sincere. They all wanted to pray. ... They were very attentive. They were very concerned. They were very empathetic."

"We were happy to do it," said Ryan. "I think everyone

wanted to help. ... It was a great way to get the team together. When they told us about the prayer blanket, everyone was very serious and genuine."

Once the blanket was complete, they prayed together for his healing, for his inner strength and for his family. The Cougars mailed the blanket, a jersey, a hat, cards and a letter from Cathy's brother Brian sharing a bit about his life as a quadriplegic.

"It is our greatest hope that when Ethan and his family receive their Cougar care package, they draw strength from knowing a football team states away not only cares for them, but is also praying for them," the team wrote on Facebook.

"Nowhere else can you bring a prayer blanket and ask everyone to tie a knot and say a prayer but a Catholic school," Ryan noted. "I think we just

The All Saints Catholic High School Cougars made a prayer blanket for a young Minnesota football player who sustained a paralyzing injury. *Courtesy photo.*

found someone who needed prayers and prayed for him."

Cathy said she hopes that when Ethan receives the blanket, he can think of the team of his peers prayerfully creating it.

"I just pray that when he has this blanket on his lap he will know that 30-plus players from Bay City, Michigan have touched this blanket and care. Every time he looks at those knots, he'll see," Cathy said. "Every kid said multiple prayers for strength (and) healing."

She also knows that the prayer blanket impacted the players who knotted it together, as they have followed Ethan's story in the media and been inspired by his positive attitude. Cathy was also moved by seeing how the players approached the situation so prayerfully, even though it was their last football game and Senior Night. She hopes this gives them the opportunity to reflect on and thank God for their own health.

"God is meant to be the center of our lives, the one who guides everything we do. To be able to recognize that, celebrate that and be grateful—that is amazing," Cathy said. "That's why we send our kids to Catholic school." †

Auburn Area Catholic School

AUBURN
GRADES: PK-5
989.662.6431



“AACCS is special because of the teachers.”

1. “AACCS is special because of the teachers. It’s like one big family! We practice and learn about our faith by praying, attending Mass and doing projects. I love AACCS because you can make friends and have fun learning!”
- Kahlia Luttrell, third grade

“I love AACCS because it’s a Catholic school. It’s special because we learn about God. My favorite part is music class.” - Annabelle Hite, third grade

“I love AACCS because it is fun and everyone is nice and welcoming. It is safe and the teachers help us learn and grow. We practice our faith by praying, receiving the Eucharist, going to Mass and praying as a school.” - Natalie Switalski, third grade

2 “Having sports after school and meeting great friends are my favorite parts of AACCS. The staff and my classmates make the school special. I love AACCS because of the activities we do as a school and the friends I have here.” - Jack Spencer, fifth grade

3. “I like making friends and playing outside with them.” -Cora Ratajczak, kindergarten (lower left)

“My favorite part of AACCS is when our friends play together.” -Allyson Gwizdala, kindergarten (upper left)

“AACCS is special because we learn about Jesus. Mrs. Spencer reads about religion to us. I love going to aftercare to spend time with my friends.”
-Charlie Jankowiak, kindergarten (upper right)

“My favorite part of AACCS is playing with my friends. To learn about our faith, we got to light the candle today to learn about baby Jesus.” - Cassidy Jankowiak, kindergarten (lower right)

4. “I love AACCS because of the good teachers. I like math and music!” - Eian Markel, fifth grade

“I love AACCS because I get to learn and spend time with my friends. We get to learn about God and Jesus.” - Connor Krueger, fifth grade





Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

brings faith to life

Beth Guza reads Scripture to children in the Level Two Atrium as Audrey Terwillegar listens.

CATECHIST BETH GUZA RECALLS A CONVERSATION SHE HAD RECENTLY WITH A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WHO HAD SPENT YEARS LEARNING ABOUT HER FAITH IN THE ATRIUM.

“She told me that if it hadn’t been for all the years in the Atrium, she would not know her faith. She is excited to live out her faith because she understands God’s plan. She understands his love for her,” Beth said.

As a catechist at Our Lady of Lake Huron Catholic School in Harbor Beach, Beth Guza and fellow catechist Lori Murawske teach Catholicism to young children using a method called Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a prepared environment, called the Atrium. The Atrium is a sacred space for spiritual growth.

The Atrium includes models of things used in liturgy, such as the altar and items in the liturgical colors, and materials relating to parables, the geography of Israel and the life of Christ. These materials, such as a model of ancient

Jerusalem and a liturgical calendar made of small wooden pieces, like a puzzle, facilitate faith-based learning and exploration.

The philosophy of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program is that even very young children have a religious life in which God is present to them. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd speaks to children’s hearts and allows them the opportunity to ponder the great mystery of God. Level One is centered around the love of the Good Shepherd, while Level Two focuses on the image of the True Vine parable as they prepare for their First Holy Eucharist.

“We’re all really born with this deep, innate sense of God. We don’t give children credit for how much they understand. They come in here

already knowing there is a God who loves them,” said Lori. “They come in here with that relationship ... and the Atrium helps them tap into that.”

A typical class includes time for prayer, song and a presentation based on age-appropriate Scripture to children. Each child is then invited to internalize and respond to the presentation by working with the materials themselves.

These items, Lori notes, are not toys but rather models of the items in church, intended for learning rather than playing.

“A book program is not able to integrate the child the way this can,” Beth said. “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd brings faith to life.”

Time in Atrium is based on the liturgical cycle and each presentation leads to the next. Children also are ready to be part of a community and learn more about the depth of their faith in Level Two, where they also prepare to receive the sacrament of First Holy

Communion.

“The children readily connect God’s plan and come to know that everything under the sun is ordered to God,” Beth said.

Children also learn about the parts of Mass, including the gestures, Sign of the Cross, and connecting the Eucharist with the Last Supper. Even the very young children learn the proper names for items at Mass.

“(Atrium) gives them the language to put with the actions,” she said. “It’s an introduction to them so when they go to Mass, it’s familiar to them.”

Often, when parents tour the Atrium, they express wonder and remark that they wish they, too, could have had this kind of catechesis as a child.

Lori, who works with kindergarteners and preschoolers in the Level One Atrium, says working with the children has helped her own faith to grow as she contemplates what Jesus meant when he told his disciples they must be childlike.

“I learn just as much from the children as they do from me. Watching them work with the materials— it’s really special. I feel so blessed to be able to observe them when they are working and learning,” she said. “It really inspires me.” †

Nouvel Catholic Central Elementary and Middle School



SAGINAW
GRADES: PK3-8
989.399.2230

"More than a school or community; it's a family."



1. "My favorite part of Nouvel is that everyone there is nice and friendly and welcoming so that no one feels left out. I practice my faith when our class prays at the beginning of each day, before lunch and at the end of the day. We also write cards to people who can't leave their houses or are in nursing homes, which brings them happiness. I think Nouvel is special because people want you to succeed. They want you to do good and are more than willing to help you be your best. I love Nouvel because my classmates are like a second family to me. I also really love the sports program and building a brotherhood with my teammates." -Charlie Thiel, eighth grade

I like all of the extra activities that Nouvel offers, like so many sports and Battle of the Books. We're lucky because faith plays a part in our everyday activities. We are able to learn about our faith throughout the day in every subject, but specifically in religion class. I really like that we worship together as a whole school at Mass every week. Nouvel is special because it's more than a school or community: it's a family." - Owen Vance, eighth grade

2. "I love Nouvel because I get an education about Jesus and I am close with everyone" - Gabby Swackhamer, eighth grade

3. Ella Krukowski, fifth grade, plays the flute in band.

4. "I love Nouvel because everyone has a chance to be faithful and learn about God and what he has done for us. I practice my faith by doing journal reflections every morning in religion with my teacher, Mrs. Witten. My favorite part of Nouvel is math class with Miss Gauthier. I think Nouvel is special because everyone is like one big family." -Leah Jamie, eighth grade (Center, pictured with kindergarteners Lochlan Aird and Kayleigh Hall)

Nouvel Catholic Central High School

Different experiences, same conclusion: *we're thankful for Nouvel*

SAGINAW
GRADES: 9-12
989.399.2230



Shawn, Ashley and Ryan McDonald are seniors at Nouvel Catholic Central High School. The cross mural behind them was designed and painted by Shawn with NCCE students for his Eagle Scout Project. The school library bookshelves pictured on page 14 were refinished by Ryan for his Eagle Scout project. The triplets plan to attend Michigan State University to study business administration and management.

THE MCDONALD TRIPLETS, SHAWN, ASHLEY AND RYAN, AGREE THEY ARE THANKFUL TO HAVE ATTENDED CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND FOR THE BREADTH OF EXPERIENCES THEY'VE HAD AT NOUVEL CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.

"Everything I have ever wanted to do at school, I have been able to do at Nouvel," Ryan said.

Ryan has participated in many of Nouvel's offerings, including the school's clay target team, which he joined as soon as it began in 2021, the theater program and the Honor Guard, made up of 10 seniors.

"Our job is to guard the cross of Jesus when entering the church and exiting the church. We are also extremely reverent to the Lord," he said.

Shawn, also a member of the Honor Guard, theater, band and tennis team, said faith-based activities have "heavily improved (his) morale and drive to go to school."

"One of the best experiences I have had at Nouvel was our senior retreat (at Hartley Nature Center)," he said. "My favorite experience ... was an affirmation exercise, where we wrote affirmation notes to each other. I have had fellow students come up to me (afterwards), acknowledging notes that were written that day, showing truly how wonderful the experience was."

Being involved in many opportunities, including National Honor Society, tennis, theater and drum major for the band, Ashley said she has grown as a disciple of Christ. She was also elected Homecoming Queen.

"As I began my first year of high school, my eyes opened to growing my faith by reaching out and helping others. Our

teachers guide us and give us opportunities to make a difference in our community," she said. "I also tried to reach out within our student body to help those that needed support. By serving those around us we not only make a difference in their lives, but enrich ours in the process."

Each of the triplets have also been involved in service opportunities, and Ryan and Shawn did their projects to earn the rank of Eagle Scout at Nouvel Catholic Central Elementary.

"I spent my childhood going to school there, and it was the best childhood I could ever ask for. When I was looking around for places to do projects, I immediately said yes to Nouvel Elementary when they gave a suggestion for a project," said Ryan, who refinished bookcases in the library.

Shawn designed a mural, which he painted with students.

"I decided to paint a mural, as it would be visible, faith-promoting and something that students could participate in," he said. "It was very rewarding. When one of the students asked me why I made the mural paint darker on the sides, I explained that it was because the further you get away from the cross, representing our faith, the darker it can be. I have since heard that comment repeated by teachers and students at NCCE, and I am grateful people are embracing the goal I set out to achieve. The mural is an example of how much even one can accomplish with the help of fellow students, teachers to guide the way and the faith as the light of life."

Ryan echoed his siblings that his faith has grown over his years at Nouvel.

"Nouvel High School is filled with virtuous and kind people. The faculty ties faith into the school lessons and the community is extremely nice and kind," he said.

"Nouvel is a welcoming community with teachers who strive for us to be successful for our future," Ashley said. "Nouvel helps us to live our call to 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.'" (Matt. 28:18) †

When faith meets service

BY DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH

Sacred Heart senior follows God by *servi*ng others

What began as a graduation requirement became a lifelong commitment to service for Sacred Heart Academy senior Sam Powell. While volunteering at a Christmas outreach event in eighth grade, something clicked.

“I watched a family come in without shoes, and all four of them left with boots,” he recalled. “Realizing that at 14 years old, I had the ability to have an impact on my community was just amazing to me. So, from that point, I stopped worrying about getting to 100 [hours required for graduation] ... and just loved being able to be a youth and still being able to have a positive impact in my community.”

The outreach event was part of his work with the Mount Pleasant Area Community Foundation’s Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), a group of young people who represent each school in Isabella County and meet to review grant applications, receive leadership and philanthropy training and plan community service projects.



Sam

A



Sam Powell has spent several summers volunteering at SpringHill Camp, a Christian kids' summer camp. *Courtesy photo.*

In addition to YAC and various smaller service projects, Sam volunteers as a Vacation Bible School leader at Sacred Heart Parish and at SpringHill Camp, a Christian kids' summer camp.

"I have really, really enjoyed just building those relationships with the kids and trying to imagine when I was that kid, what I was going through, and how that smile from an older kid just could absolutely change my day—because I remember that happening for me," he said.

DISCOVERING SERVICE IN SCRIPTURE

Sam's heart for service is inspired by his parents Rob

and Emma, who both work in the nonprofit sector and have sought to raise Sam and their daughter Marilyn with the same commitment. Their Catholic faith also played a major role in teaching Sam the value of helping others.

His eighth-grade theology teacher, Steve Sacco, tracked students' service hours and helped Sam draw a clear connection between his Catholic faith and service. Lee Ann Puhlman, a theology teacher for Sacred Heart Academy's secondary grades, also helped him continue to understand the importance of the two.

"(Mrs. Puhlman) guided the class through religious-

based discussion on real world events and taught how faith is so much more than time and words but how it is also action. She made me desire to take my own faith and serve my community," he said.

Sam's mother, Emma, believes that having that dedicated class time to discuss and reflect on big questions, such as the struggles people face daily, helped Sam to hear the call to serve others.

"We're thankful as parents that (students) are being asked to consider those questions in regard to Scripture as well," she said.

As Sam tried to discern God's will, he discovered the answer in Scripture.

"As I started looking at my Bible, there was a clear example of service," he said. "Service can directly correlate to what God wants from us. I recognize that I am incredibly lucky and incredibly blessed, and (I'm) just trying to use some of that fortune for the betterment of others."

This emphasis on service is firmly rooted in the Faith.

"Service is vital to living our Catholic Christian faith in a real and tangible way," said his teacher Lee Ann. "We need to recognize that we are not isolated on our faith journey; we journey together. We want what is best for everyone, and that involves doing the work."

ABOUT EXPERIENCES, NOT HOURS

By November 2022, Sam had accumulated 350 service hours and expects to graduate with more than 400 hours. Sacred Heart Academy begins tracking service hours in seventh grade, and the school provides numerous opportunities for students to reach the required 100 hours.

"To see (students) take pleasure in volunteering is such a joy as a parent," Emma said. "It becomes less about the hours and more about the experiences of them volunteering and serving our community. It's about the legacy they're leaving."

"Service can directly correlate to what God wants from us."

- SAM POWELL



Each high school in the Diocese of Saginaw requires a set number of service hours to graduate, and each school emphasizes the importance of service, something Sam sees as especially valuable.

That’s really cool when you go to a school that so strongly promotes this idea of stewardship and sacrifice and service,” he said. “It’s been so amazing to grow with like-minded peers, and to ... create strong friendships that I know are with good people who are trying to do good things.”

Sam has also benefited from the opportunity to be a part of the school’s varsity basketball, golf and quiz bowl teams, National Honor Society, Science Olympiad and the pre-med club. He also tutors younger students.

“I have grown as a leader as I have faced challenges head-on, solved real-world

problems and watched as kids have both grown closer to God and excelled in their academic efforts,” he said.

DOMINO EFFECT FOR GOOD

Sam explains that at Sacred Heart Academy, students learn about not only the love of God, but also the law of God— that God desires us to use our gifts and talents to help others rather than focusing on ourselves. He speaks of the “domino effect,” how a small action can ripple out to enact great change.

“That lesson, the domino effect, and how one good action can inspire someone else to do a good action and overall create a slightly better world has been a really powerful lesson that Sacred Heart has taught me,” he said.

Everyone can prioritize making time for service, he said.

(Above) “It just seemed like a natural course for me whenever the opportunity arose, to try to serve,” said Sam Powell. Here, he volunteers at a Lions Club barbecue dinner. *Courtesy photo*

(Upper left) Sam Powell, center, volunteers at his parish, Sacred Heart in Mount Pleasant, as a Vacation Bible School leader. *Courtesy photo.*

(Lower left) Along with other youth leaders, Sam Powell participates on a panel titled “Exploring Opportunities to Amplify Youth Voice” during the Council on Michigan Foundations 50th Conference on Nov. 18. *Courtesy photo.*

“If (someone) took that moment to go to a service project for two hours, the second they recognize the impact they just had on another human being, I think it would change their whole outlook on service as a whole,” he said.

“Sam is demonstrating that young people can do wonderful things when faith is put into action,” Lee Ann said.

Deeply impacted by the positive difference service can make in others’ lives,

Sam plans to pursue a medical track in college and hopes to be able to volunteer as a doctor someday.

“I really just want to continue that foundation of service, and ... eventually be a part of boards and nonprofits I strongly believe in and become a donor of organizations that I think are doing great things,” he said. “I know that this concept of community service will always be a part of my life in one way or another.” †



MOUNT PLEASANT
GRADES: PK-12
989.772.1457

Sacred Heart Academy

"At Sacred Heart, we have a special thing – we get to praise Jesus!"

1. "My favorite part of Sacred Heart Academy is being able to share my faith with my students. We practice our faith and read Bible stories together. I love Sacred Heart because of the supportive and faith-filled atmosphere. The ability to share my faith with my students brings me closer to Christ and strengthens my faith."
-Laurie Simon, second grade teacher

"I love Sacred Heart because we really care about Jesus! I pray every day. Sacred Heart Academy is special because we have a church."
-Reagan Block, second grade (left)

"We pray and we learn a lot. It's fun!"
-Payton Sopha, second grade

3. "We talk about Jesus at school, home and everywhere! I think Sacred Heart is special because we get to go to church."
- Ayden Nieten, kindergarten

"Everybody is nice, we pray every day and we get to go to church when other schools don't. My favorite part of Sacred Heart Academy is everybody is so nice!"
- Jaxon Moore, sixth grade

3. "Everybody knows each other, so we are all like one big family. At Sacred Heart, we have a special thing – we get to praise Jesus!" - Emmy Edwards, sixth grade

"I love Sacred Heart because I love learning about Jesus! We talk about Jesus every morning. We have the best teachers!" - Lillian Mason, kindergarten

4. "I love my students! I love the community at Sacred Heart Academy and how I know all my students' names." - Nikki Taylor, music teacher

Sacred Heart Academy offers specials such as music, art, physical education, computer studies and band for elementary students.



St. Brigid of Kildare Catholic School

MIDLAND
GRADES: K-8
989.835.9481



Assistant principal recognized for excellence



St. Brigid teachers pose with Sherri Nemeth, holding her award, at the MANS Conference in November. Courtesy photo.

ST. BRIGID, LIKE EACH OF OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, OFFERS AN EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION FROM HIGHLY-QUALIFIED TEACHERS WHO ARE CALLED TO THIS MINISTRY— AND THEIR EXCELLENCE IS RECOGNIZED OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL BUILDING, AS WELL.

This year, assistant principal and reading specialist Sherri Nemeth was recognized by MANS (Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools) and received their Faith-Based Educator Award. “This award is conferred to an educator who exemplifies the very best in faith-based education. Your nominator Laura Wilkowski, and the peer review team, noted your love for learning, embrace of data, leadership and commitment to your ministry as rationale for your

selection,” read the press release from MANS.

“Sherri has a very calm manner with students, staff and parents and models the Faith in all that she says and does,” said Laura Wilkowski, principal at St. Brigid Catholic School. “She is a true example of service and dedication in her calling.”

“Being a faith-based educator is remarkable. I am able to instill values and virtues in children on a daily basis while teaching core subjects. We are able to make

connections between what Jesus did and how we should follow him and his ways,” she said. “I love working with the students and trying to make the lessons engaging and fun while using data to drive my instruction.”

A 17-year veteran of St. Brigid, Sherri has used her gifts in several positions.

“Sherri taught second grade for years. She inspired kids to do more, try harder and push themselves using a variety of methods,” Laura said, recalling a jar of popcorn kernels and sand Sherri filled when students were well-behaved, tried hard despite challenges or helped one another. When the jar was full, students were rewarded with crazy socks day, stuffed

animal days and even a “camping day” — complete with tents and smores.

“Last year, Sherri moved to a much-needed reading specialist role, one she had prior to teaching, and was able to revamp our reading interventions program to include good pre- and post-assessments, track tutoring time and create IRIPs (Individualized Reading Improvement Plans) for students and parents,” Laura said.

In her assistant principal role, Sherri has also helped by mentoring teachers, attending administrative meetings and student discipline. As her ministry evolves, Sherri said she is always learning.

“I have learned that education is ever-changing. I have always said I am a life-long learner, and you certainly need to be in education. Knowing new ways to reach and teach all children is ongoing. There are many strategies, but finding the right ones for each individual child is the challenge,” she said.

Sherri views her role not as a job, but as a ministry.

“My ministry is the children. As Jesus said, ‘let the children come to me,’ I too receive joy in being around the children,” she said. “Helping them grow socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically is gratifying. Being able to bring Jesus and his teachings into the classroom on a daily basis is amazing.” †

St. Elizabeth Area Catholic School

Students take ownership of their faith.

REESE | GRADES: PK-8
989.868.4108



St. Elizabeth fifth through eighth grade students were blessed to spend a beautiful retreat day in Mio at the Our Lady of the Woods Shrine in October. *Courtesy photo.*

FROM THE MOMENT THEY ENTER TO THE MOMENT THEY LEAVE, STUDENTS ARE SURROUNDED BY THE FAITH, SAID GABBIE MARGUERY, PRINCIPAL AT ST. ELIZABETH AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN REESE.

Each student from kindergarten to eighth grade writes their own prayers and leads school-wide morning prayer throughout the year, along with weekly Rosaries in October and May, the Stations of the Cross on Holy Thursday and Tenebrae services.

Students also help plan school Masses, selecting songs based on the day's readings and writing the Prayers of the Faithful— even first graders. Students lector, cantor, present the gifts and serve at the altar.

"They are going to be the leaders of tomorrow in our churches," Gabbie said. "It's

giving them the opportunity to practice their faith in different ways. ... It means that you are a part of the Church."

Hannah Ellison, a third-generation St. Elizabeth student, is grateful for these opportunities.

"It makes me feel closer to God. It makes me feel good to be involved with church," said the sixth grader.

Hannah also enjoys a new addition to St. Elizabeth: Faithful Fridays.

"They're typically fun. When we get to do (those things), just like for church, it kind of makes me feel like we're doing something with God, and we're

praying with God and being closer to him," she said.

During the synod, students reported they loved to practice and learn more about their faith — and they wanted more. (See "Synod inspires changes in Catholic schools," FAITH Saginaw, Issue 3, 2022.) Faithful Fridays began as one way to meet that desire.

Each week, students gather for a different activity. One Friday they practiced hymns for the school's All Souls' Day Mass, and at another Father Andy LaFramboise, pastor, spoke about vocations.

Like many of our Catholic schools, St. Elizabeth pairs

younger and older students to be "prayer buddies." These prayer buddies accompany the younger students to Mass and help them follow along with the liturgy, as well as be their friend throughout the year. Sometimes younger students even ask their prayer buddy to be their Confirmation sponsor.

Gabbie and her staff strongly believe in the importance of infusing Catholic faith in everything they do.

"We need to keep our schools Catholic, and the faith is ... at the center of everything," Gabbie said. "If children are relaxed, feel they're cared for and are loved, they're going to learn. And our faith allows them to feel safe."

"We are intentional, because we are a Catholic school, what we do has to show: this is our faith. And this is what we are going to carry with us all our lives," she continued.

When they graduate, Gabbie writes each student a letter.

"I always tell them with God, everything is possible," she said. "If I can pass that on to my kids— I've done my job." †

St. Joseph the Worker Catholic School

“The way the parents and staff work together make St. Joseph the Worker special.”

BEAL CITY
GRADES: K-6
989.644.3970



1. “I love my Catholic school because the community support is amazing. The way the parents and staff work together make St. Joseph the Worker special. The best part is being able to share my faith with my students.” - Laurie Schafer, fourth grade teacher

“I love St. Joseph the Worker because the teachers teach us new things everyday, and we learn about God. My favorite part of St. Joseph the Worker is that we can go to church. We also learn about our virtues and in religion class. We learn about new things and make new friends.” -Matilda Schafer, fourth grade

2. “My favorite part of St. Joseph the Worker is that we are able to learn. Our school is special because we get to go to church. I love St. Joseph the Worker because they help us learn and we get to talk about God.” - Leo Schafer, kindergarten

“My favorite part of St. Joseph the Worker is you get to learn. I like to learn math and art. We learn different prayers and we get to go to church. I love St. Joseph the Worker because you get to learn, have fun and the teachers are very nice.” - Bennett Block, second grade

3. “My favorite part about St. Joseph the Worker is my teachers. My school is special because of the good education and the teachers. I love my peers and friends.” - Ashlyn Thielen, sixth grade (second from left)

“I practice my faith by serving at Mass. St. Joseph the worker is special because of the caring staff. I love my school because of the great education.” - Sawyer Trommater, sixth grade (third from left)

Also pictured are Lillie Wilson, left, and Matilda Schafer, right.

4. “I like it when we have assemblies. Our school is special because we go to church. I learn about my faith in religion class. I love St. Joseph the Worker because of the teachers.” -Lillie Wilson, fifth grade





ALMA
GRADES: PK-6
989.463.4579

St. Mary Catholic School

"I feel like I belong here, and it feels great!"

1. "My Catholic school is my family! The best part about teaching in a Catholic school is being able to learn and grow in my own faith as I teach it and seeing my students' faith grow throughout their academic career. It's so special to see kids pray!" - Allie Buckingham, kindergarten and young 5's teacher

Also pictured is Noah Batista learning to write his and a friend's names. He says his favorite parts about St. Mary's are his friends and the playground.

2. "I learn about my faith from school. Everyone here makes St. Mary's special. It's fun and I like learning." - Quame Sanders, first grade

3. "Learning is fun! We learn about faith by saying the Lord's prayer. St. Mary's is special because of the principal and teachers." - Raegan Wilson, first grade

4. "Everyone is kind at St. Mary's! We practice our faith by respecting others." - Evelyn Krebs, fifth grade

"I love St. Mary's because I love the family atmosphere. St. Mary staff and students are great to work with. I love teaching in a Catholic school because I am able to teach faith to students. I feel it is a spiritual reward for not only me but for my students too." - Sally Johnston, fifth and sixth grade teacher

"My favorite part about St. Mary's is all the people who help and love us. We practice our faith by being nice to others and people always help others. I feel like I belong here, and it feels great!" - Alaina McKowen, fifth grade



St. Michael Catholic School

"You can be friends with everyone!"



PINCONNING
GRADES: YOUNG 5'S-8
989.879.3063



1



2

1. Makenna Cooley, a fifth grader, raises her hand while reading.

"I would like to tell my students that they are a blessing, full of God's grace. If St. Michael School wrote a book, the title would be "God Lives Here." I see it every day in the smiling faces of the children and staff and in the Christ-centered atmosphere of our school."

- Laura Sprywa, her fifth grade teacher



3

2. "My favorite part of St. Michael's school is being able to have a school family. I love St. Michael's School because we are all kind to each other and I am happy to be here. We get to have specials like art, gym and technology. In school I practice my faith by praying and helping people in the ways God would want me to."

-Ethan Marshall, seventh grade



4

3. "I love St. Michael's because of the family-like atmosphere and the small classes so you can be friends with everyone! It's such a great school and you have more one-on-one time with the teachers here. The special thing about St. Michael's School is how small the classes are so you can have a great relationship with almost every person! To learn about and practice our faith, we go to church every Thursday and we take religion class and study how to be better Christians."

-Abigail Grzegorzczuk, eighth grade (left)

"There's just too many favorite parts of St. Michael's! Here are a few: going to church on Thursday, all the decorations in the school, and all the teachers are nice. St. Michael's is special because it's a Catholic school. I love St. Michael's because I have so many friends here."

-Louisa Cianek, sixth grade (second from the right)
Abigail and Louisa are pictured with Finn Fuhrman and Audra Foco.

4. Archer Dzurka, third grade, and Mayson Lahar, second grade, enjoy learning at St. Michael's. In addition to standard curriculum and religious instruction, the school offers specials such as technology, art and physical education.

Make faith a way of life in the family



We invest so much time, money and energy into our children. We spend and plan for their education, social development, braces, camps and so many other things. All of these are good and serve a helpful and beneficial purpose in our mission to raise great humans! But the most important thing we can do for our children is to foster their discipleship and teach them to live in such a way that Jesus is truly the center of their life. Our faith is the answer to everything that causes worry, fear, disappointment or frustration. Faith is the blueprint for building a rich, successful, happy, grace-filled life, and this is exactly the wish we have for our kids. Here are some ideas to help your kids grow in faith.



SHERI WOHLFERT

is a Catholic school teacher, speaker, writer and founder of Joyful Words Ministries. Sheri blogs at www.joyfulwords.org.

► **LIVE LOVE**

Because God said so! “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.” (Dt 6:5-7) That kind of love is what fills Scripture, and we’re called as parents to offer it most abundantly to our families. Using Scripture in this way to help guide our actions and the actions of our kids lays a powerful foundation.

► **SPOTLIGHT ON THE SACRAMENTS**

Don’t just “go to church.” Celebrate Mass! Treat Mass like it is a great family celebration. Talk about it, prepare for it by reading the readings together before you go, and talk about the readings after Mass. On the way home each person, including the parents, should share one thing they learned, one change they were inspired to make or something they were struck by during Mass. Preparing for and going to confession together demonstrates receiving and extending mercy. Eucharistic adoration or even a quick visit to an empty church to “say hi to Jesus” emphasizes the importance of including Jesus in regular days.



TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO; EVEN WHEN HE IS OLD HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.”

- PRV 22: 6

► **VISUAL EXTRAS**

If our children see us attend a daily Mass or walk into a room to discover you reading Scripture or praying in the quiet, you’ve given them a powerful visual of a disciple. It’s impossible to make faith important to them if they can’t see that it’s important to you.

If you put any one of these things in place, you begin to move faith from a one-hour obligatory event on Sunday to a way of life. †

THE RECIPE FOR *Catholic education*

I remember one day during lunch duty at the kids' school, I saw a plate of dark chocolate and mint brownies sitting on the countertop in the kitchen. They looked so good that my impulse was to lift the clear lid and sneak one while no one was looking. I ignored the urge and carried on with my duties, but each time I stepped into the kitchen, they caught my eye. They tempted and taunted me. As I gazed at the perfectly stacked plate of brownies, one of the other lunch moms came into the kitchen and quickly grabbed them to pass out to her son's class for his birthday. That "other lunch mom" happened to be a friend, so I grabbed her arm and told her how good they looked. Boom. She gave me one. It was, in a word, amazing.

And I'm not the only one who loves them. Karla selflessly organizes a luncheon for the teachers and staff regularly, and by now everyone at the school has enjoyed her chocolate mint brownies at one time or another.

But my friend Karla brings more than just great recipes to the school. She and her husband, along with the many other families at the school, bring an example of their faith. They share their knowledge, insights and enthusiasm for what the Catholic faith teaches and calls us to be.

A Catholic school was never meant to be just a good, private school where kids can get a great education. In addition to all of that, Catholic schools must be a place where students learn about their faith, live their faith and graduate with pride and excitement about being a part of the Catholic family.

I am so thankful for the joyful and energetic leadership at our children's school. Every week I learn something new about my faith that I, as an adult, did not yet know because my children share what they are learning. And I am so grateful for the families in our school who are also eager to share, learn about, and live their Catholic identity. If my family can get all of that, plus great recipes for delicious mint brownies, I know our family is in the right school! †



MICHELLE DIFRANCO
is a designer and the busy mom of three children.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANE FOLKERTSMA



KARLA'S CHOCOLATE MINT BROWNIES

- 1 box dark chocolate brownie mix
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 1 ½ tablespoons milk
- ½ teaspoon peppermint extract
- A couple of drops green food coloring
- 6 tablespoons butter
- ¾ cup chocolate chips

Prepare the brownie mix as directed in 9 x 13 pan, being careful not to overbake. Set aside to cool.

FOR THE FROSTING, combine using mixer: butter, powdered sugar, milk, peppermint extract and green food coloring. Beat until fluffy. Spread the frosting on top of the brownies after they have cooled.

FOR THE TOP LAYER, melt the butter and chocolate chips slowly in a small saucepan on low heat. Mix until smooth and all the chocolate is melted. Let cool partially before pouring over frosting; gently use the back of a spoon or spatula to spread evenly. Allow chocolate to set before cutting into squares.

ST. BRIGID CATHOLIC SCHOOL CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF EDUCATION AND FAITH



St. Brigid of Kildare Catholic School students pose for a photo by a sign celebrating the school's centennial. *Courtesy photo.*



Visitors to the Hall of History could view photos and items from the school's history. *Photo by Jeff Schrier.*

Catholic education has a long history in Midland. St. Brigid Catholic School kicked off celebrating their centennial in August with a Hall of History in Midland. Alumni, parishioners, students and families gathered to reminisce about their experiences at St. Brigid, learn about its past and look forward to its future.

"Our Hall of History [provided] a great picture of our school over the last 100 years," said Laura Wilkowski, who has served as St. Brigid's principal since 2018. "While there have been many changes, each change brought students what they needed in order to grow in faith, in service and in their education."

The Hall of History also included alumni profiles, showcasing the many ways a Catholic school education benefitted its graduates. Visitors could view newspaper articles and artifacts from the past century, such as a brick from the original school and children's missals, as well as photographs and materials from recent years.

"It reminds us that our ability to adapt to the changing needs of the community, students and staff while maintaining what is central to our faith can sustain us through anything," Laura said. "We look forward to the start of our next hundred years!"

"Catholic education has been a major component of our parish mission for a century," said Father Andy Booms, pastor of St. Brigid of Kildare Parish. "While we are enjoying the rich history, we are also working to make sure that a Catholic education is part of the blessed future of our parish."

BISHOP GRUSS ADMITS SEVEN MEN AS PERMANENT DEACON CANDIDATES



Jason Rasmussen, Hugh LeFevre, Matt Begres, John Copes, Bob Zondlak, Lenn Stankiewicz and Bob Sasiela were admitted as permanent diaconate candidates by Bishop Robert Gruss. *Photo by Thor Rasmussen.*

On Nov. 6, Bishop Robert Gruss celebrated the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for seven men during Mass at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw.

"In this rite, the one who aspires to ordination publicly manifests his will to offer himself to God and the Church to exercise a sacred order. In this way, he is admitted into the ranks of candidates for the diaconate" (National Directory, 210).

Candidates will now continue on a three-year journey of preparation to serve in the Diocese of Saginaw as permanent deacons: ordained ministers who carry out works of charity, evangelize, and serve in various liturgical roles such as proclaiming the Gospel, preaching homilies, celebrating baptisms and presiding at weddings and funerals outside of Mass.

The candidates are:

Matthew Begres | Sacred Heart Parish, Mount Pleasant

John Copes | St. Michael Parish, Maple Grove

Hugh LeFevre | St. Dominic Parish, Saginaw

Jason Rasmussen | Holy Spirit Parish, Shields

Robert Sasiela | St. Joseph Parish, Saginaw

Leonard Stankiewicz | St. Michael Parish, Maple Grove

Robert Zondlak | Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Midland

If you or any man you know expresses a desire or hears the call to serve as a permanent deacon, please e-mail Dr. Dan Osborn at dosborn@diosag.org or call him at 989.797.6662. Applications for the permanent deacon program are only accepted once every four years, and a key cutoff date is May 1. Both married and single men may apply.



ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY PARISH, SCHOOL CELEBRATES 150 YEARS AS A PARISH, 75 YEARS OF EDUCATION



Students from St. Elizabeth Area Catholic School and parish children participated in the choir for the parish's 150th anniversary Mass. "They were so proud that they were there, you know, next to the big choir and singing their song," recalled principal Gabbie Marguery. *Photo by Jeff Schrier.*



Bishop Robert Gruss hugs a parishioner following the anniversary Mass. *Photo by Jeff Schrier.*

From its humble beginnings as a mission church, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish has ministered to the faithful for 150 years. Its school, celebrating 75 years, continues to educate students from families now in the third generation.

"This is absolutely vital to our family atmosphere. You are family," said Dawn Lamb, who teaches seventh and eighth grade at St. Elizabeth Area Catholic School. Her father and his siblings, she and her brothers and now all her children have attended the school. There are even some parishioners who attended St. Elizabeth when the school opened in 1947.

"The love of our school community is strong. Many have attended here and can look back with fond memories," she said. "Now that I have taught her for 20 years, I can say all the kids I have had are still 'my kids.' I love seeing them at Mass and in the community and am thankful that I can still be a small part of their lives now, even adults."

Principal Gabbie Marguery, who has been at St. Elizabeth for 18 years, said it is a privilege to celebrate the school's milestone.

"From the moment I came, I have seen the love of the community for our school

and the pride they take in the children's accomplishments and their ministries at Mass. I know the sacrifices that the community has made to have the school, so it has always been important to me to continue the work of those that came before who had a vision for the school," she said. "This building was built with love and the hard work of parishioners, parents and alumni who laid bricks and built the school from the ground up."

Father Andy LaFramboise, pastor, also recalls the many priests, religious, teachers, catechists and families who have passed on the faith through generations.

"Celebrating 150 years as a parish is an opportunity for us to thank the Lord for his abundant blessings," he said. "It is also a call to us to trust in what God is doing in us now and in the future. Jesus is at work in Reese. It is part of his pasture, and he seeks to shepherd us and feed us, and to draw us close to his heart. The people of St. Elizabeth feel blessed to have this anniversary. There is a great sense of hard work and stewardship that has been part of the heritage of St. Elizabeth. People are grateful for this and want this legacy to continue."



Our Catholic Schools CALL TO SCHEDULE A TOUR!

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Email: Kpham@diosag.org

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Auburn Area Catholic, Auburn

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All Saints Catholic Middle and High, Bay City

989.892.2533 | 6-12

All Saints Catholic Elementary, Bay City

989.892.4371 | PK3-5

Our Lady of Lake Huron, Harbor Beach

989.479.3427 | PK-8

St. Brigid of Kildare, Midland

989.835.9481 | K-8

Sacred Heart Academy, Mount Pleasant

989.773.9530 | PK-12

St. Joseph the Worker, Beal City

989.644.3970 | K-6

St. Michael, Pinconning

989.879.3063 | Young 5's-8

St. Elizabeth Area, Reese

989.868.4108 | PK-8

Nouvel Catholic Central Elementary and Middle School

989.399.2230 | PK3-8*

*Grades 7-8 will be moving to the high school building in 2023-24.

Nouvel Catholic Central High School, Saginaw

989.399.2230 | 9-12

Sister Roberta's legacy

BY MARY BETH LOOBY

of support to lay ministry continues through endowment



Founded shortly after Vatican II, the Lay Ministry Program of the Diocese of Saginaw was on the cutting edge. Begun in 1978 by Bishop Francis F. Reh, Sister Roberta Kolasa and a group of diocesan priests, the program would commission 500 lay ministers within its first 25 years.

One of the co-founders of the Lay Ministry Program, Sister Roberta, SJ, was an alumnus of our Diocesan Catholic schools, a Felician sister, a beloved teacher and theologian, and a woman proud of her Polish heritage. Her father was born in Poland and her mother was from a Polish district in Chicago. Those who were part of her lay ministry program speak of her with only the highest regard. She was recognized with the National Association of Lay Ministers Award and inducted into the Saginaw Catholic Schools Hall of Fame.

Sister Roberta graduated as valedictorian from Saginaw's Holy Rosary High School in 1956. After high school graduation, she entered the Felician Sisters' Convent in Livonia and received a BA from Madonna College. She taught at St. Christopher School in Bridgeport, where she shared her Polish heritage with her students, teaching them Polish dancing with authentic Polish attire. Sister Roberta studied in Rome during Vatican II. In 1973, Sister Roberta was among the first sisters who founded the community of the Servants of Jesus (SJ) which received the official approval of the Vatican in 1974.

After playing an instrumental role in developing the new lay ministry program, Sister Roberta was appointed the first director in 1979. She continued to be involved until her death on Sept. 25, 2013.

Sister Jo Gaugier, OP, a close friend of Sister Roberta and lay ministry team member, came to the Saginaw Diocese in 1983. The two worked closely together and were co-coordinators of the program.

"Sister Roberta was very committed and dedicated to helping people develop their spiritual life," Sister Jo said. "She had a master's degree from Santa Maria College for religious sisters in Rome and a second master's in Christian spirituality from Creighton University."

Lay ministers serve the faithful through adult faith formation, annulment advocacy, Baptismal preparation; children's liturgy, presiding at funeral vigils, grief recovery, liturgical planning, outreach to the poor, being pastoral associates and organizing worship services outside of Mass, as well as catechetical, BeFriender, homebound and nursing home, youth, jail and engagement and marriage ministries.

After more than four decades of lay ministry in the Saginaw Catholic Diocese, Sister Jo enthusiastically adds that there are still more lay ministers and more ministries yet to be named!

She also believes that "informed and formed lay ministers serve beyond church (ecclesia) and also in the world: family, society and workplace."

Another member of the lay ministry team, Carole Watters, describes the formation as a complete program that changes people spiritually and emotionally.

More than 40 years later, Sister Roberta is loved and revered by all those in the Lay Ministry Program. Many were touched by her life, including her friend and lay ministry team member Carole Watters, who established the Sister Roberta Kolasa Endowment for Lay Ministry in 2013 with the CCFMM. The fund was created as a lasting memorial to Sister Roberta for her unwavering devotion to her Catholic faith and her love and support for the Lay Ministry Program.

"Sister Roberta's commitment and dedication to helping lay ministry formation helps people in our community walk with Christ and will continue to do so through the endowment established in her memory," said Kristin Smith, executive director of the CCFMM. †

The CCFMM is here to help guide you with your planned and legacy giving.



To learn more about the endowments or to make a donation, please visit ccfmm.org.

The Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan is a registered 501(c)(3), and all gifts are tax-deductible.

For more information, call the CCFMM's executive director Kristin Smith at 989.599.0079 or kristin.smith@ccfmm.org



ALUMNI

Calling all Catholic School Alumni

FROM THE DIOCESE OF SAGINAW



BY MARY BETH LOOBY



The legacy of Catholic school education in our diocese dates back more than 100 years, well before the Diocese of Saginaw was even formed. Thousands of students have received an outstanding, Christ-centered education in our schools and are serving in communities around the globe in countless ways.

Who are our diocesan alumni? They are teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, stay-at-home parents, artists, actors, accountants, salespeople, coaches, business owners, athletes, musicians, priests, religious sisters, financial advisors and more.

We want to do a better job of connecting with our alumni who have graduated from our Catholic schools; however, getting in touch is a challenging task. Many schools have closed and many graduates are living far away.

You can help!

We are looking for your help in building our alumni roster. With the newly formed Catholic School Council, a committee is now working to gather names and write stories about alumni who have graduated from schools from throughout the Diocese of Saginaw.

If you attended a Catholic school in the Diocese of Saginaw, please use your smartphone camera to **scan the QR code** to reconnect with our Diocese of Saginaw Catholic School community! If you have family or friends who graduated from our schools, please forward this on to them and encourage them to do the same.



We want to stay connected and share stories featuring our alumni. We look forward to hearing from you!

(Photos from top to bottom)

Eager students raise their hands in this undated photograph from St. Stanislaus Catholic School in Bay City.

The St. Stephen (Saginaw) Catholic School PomPom Team poses with a trophy in 1977.

Students study in the library of St. Michael Catholic School in Maple Grove on May 3, 1959.

Band students from Our Lady of Lake Huron in Harbor Beach are pictured in this undated photograph.

All photos are part of the Catholic Weekly Collection managed by the Diocese of Saginaw Archives.



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

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14/1



10

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schools

3

high
schools

Our students are
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likely to attend
Sunday Mass



Gray, Mark, Center for Applied Research
in the Apostolate (CARA), 2015



100%
of graduates go on
to college, military or
skilled trades

>\$3.6 Million
in college scholarships
*accepted in 2022
(student-reported totals)*

High school
students volunteer
100+ hours
*on average to their school,
parish and community*