

LORICA

A PUBLICATION OF ST. PATRICK PARISH, FRANKLIN PA

*E*ducation

in the church, classroom, & home





PERFECTING THE MIND

With the passing of summer and the arrival of fall, school is now in full swing and therefore we are dedicating this, our third issue of Lorica Magazine, to the topic of Education. As you thumb through the pages you will be introduced to parishioners, past and present, who have dedicated their lives to education and have taken an active role in the formation of our youth.

Also highlighted within these pages are various groups, institutions and parish programs that aid and assist parents in carrying out their duty as Christian parents. As the Church clearly teaches, parents are the primary teachers of their children, especially in the ways of faith and holy religion, and this role can neither be abdicated nor taken away because it is both fundamental and inalienable.

In one of his less well-known talks, Archbishop Fulton Sheen discusses the purpose of education. He understood the task of education to be the training of the whole man, both intellect and will. The archbishop explained that “knowledge is in the intellect or the mind and that character is in the will or our decisions.”

He states, “We wouldn’t buy a suit with one sleeve or pants with one leg.” A similar stance ought to be adopted as regards education. “It should perfect the mind and build character.”

How do we perfect the mind? Exercise! “By using it and by pouring truth into it,” Archbishop Sheen says. He then elaborates, “Things do not become better with neglect. A white fence does not become whiter in time. Muscles that are not exercised, atrophy. A garden does not become a better garden by letting nature take its course. Weeds grow and will choke the plants, and

if flowers are not watered, they will begin to wilt.” He concludes, “If we neglect our minds ignorance follows. The capacity for thought and discerning truth is lost.”

The late archbishop insists, “What we learn matters!” He follows this claim up with the following statement “As food determines your health, so ideas determine our behavior. We wouldn’t eat garbage or poison. Likewise, we shouldn’t consume bad ideas or false and destructive ideas.”

Our stomachs are not nearly as important as our minds – that is the intellect. Character, on the other hand, depends on whether we give the primacy to the body or to the soul.

There is an ancient Native American legend about a grandfather passing wisdom down to his young grandson. The grandfather shared a story with the young boy about two wolves within one’s self. One wolf was good and the other evil. The two wolves waged war and battled against one another. The young boy, intrigued by the old man’s story, asked which wolf wins, and the grandfather replied, “Whichever one you feed.”

It is my hope that you, the reader, will find that the witness, dedication, and commitment of so many of St. Patrick’s parishioners may inspire, uplift, and encourage you, and that this spotlight on education will edify the intellect, nourish the soul, and lead to further engagement within our parish and community.



In Christ,

Rev. James C. Campbell

Rev. James C. Campbell

REMEMBERING MY FRIEND JEAN BAJOREK

BY MARY JO LIPANI

I first met Jean as a freshman in the cadet program at Mercyhurst College. She was from Franklin and the only daughter of Pete and Stella Bajorek. She had two brothers - Bob, a policeman, and Jim, her twin. They grew up on Grant Street.

Our first summer we began to get to know all the other girls in the program who roomed in our dorm. Jean spent a lot of time studying in the library. She didn't mind the walk from dorm to library and was always determined to do her best.

Her first teaching assignment was at Saint Titus in Titusville with another cadet Emily Henle from Ambridge. Jean was a born teacher - she loved children and she loved books. After Titusville, she got a job with the Franklin School District where she taught second grade until her retirement.

Jean was a kind, caring person. Her rosy cheeks and beautiful smile were evidence of the goodness within. She especially loved her church and enjoyed going to daily Mass, serving on parish council, and setting up a parish library in the school. She made many trips to bookstores in Erie in search of recommended books.

Jean loved her little house on Gurney Road and later her three-story house on Liberty Street. She collected antiques and always found just the perfect piece. The gorgeous flowers she prearranged for her own funeral were evidence of her love of flowers.

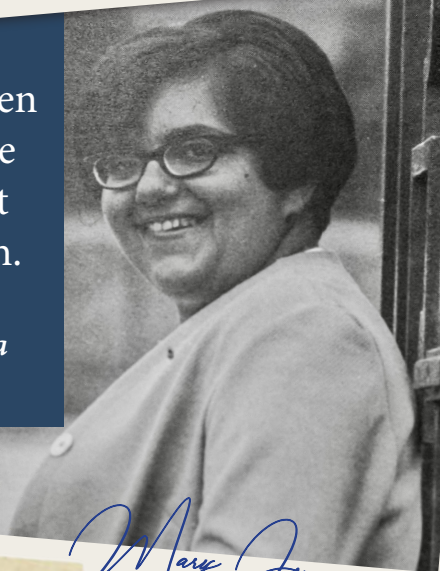
Her dream of becoming an author of children's books was realized with *Kindness in the Forest*, published in 2008 and dedicated to the students of Saint Patrick School. She was inspired by the folk art dolls of Cathy McCorkle.

To know her was to love her, and her many friends will miss her visits, their walks together, and finding just the right book. Saint Patrick became her family and her treasures their endowment.



Friendship, when
it is real, is one
of the greatest
goods on earth.

St. Teresa of Avila



Born in 1778 in Dublin, Catherine McAuley's early life was greatly influenced by her Catholic father who had a passion for serving the poor. She would often accompany him as he personally distributed food and necessities to poor families. Even though he died when she was only five years old, he planted a seed of service to the poor in young Catherine. Orphaned as a teenager after her mother died, Catherine lived as a companion in other households, often not able to practice her Catholic faith openly. It was one of these families, the Callahans, who treated her as their own. They allowed her to use a small house on their property, and she began teaching girls there. She managed the family's charity money, stretching it to maximize the good it could do for the poor. Because of this, after Mr. and Mrs. Callahan died, Catherine was bequeathed their entire estate which today would be valued between \$3-5 million.

This money enabled Catherine to build the House of Mercy on Baggot Street in an affluent neighborhood of Dublin in 1827, and she eventually poured the entire estate into her ministry to the poor. Her vision was to educate young women, believing that nothing could be more important to society and to the happiness of the poor. She showed her strength in meeting the anti-Catholic sentiment of the time, particularly in the well-to-do area in which she built the House of Mercy. Her initial intention was to assemble a dedicated group of Catholic volunteers, not to start a convent, but when Archbishop Murray intervened, it became clear to her that, if her ministry was to endure, they should become a religious order, and she must study to become a nun. The archbishop encouraged her and assisted with the process, accepting the vows of the first three sisters and naming Catherine as Mother Superior.

The Sisters of Mercy order was founded on December 12, 1831. Mother McAuley and her two companions returned to Baggot Street to continue their mission. Rather than the cloistered life of the contemplative orders which existed at the time, the Sisters of Mercy went into the community to help the poor and uneducated - a new concept, earning them the nickname "the walking sisters." Their ministry spread throughout Ireland as they established many new convents.

In 1843, Father Michael O'Connor, the bishop of a new diocese in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, contacted Mother McAuley for help in America. Thirty-five of the thirty-six sisters volunteered to go. With seven courageous sisters aboard, including Sister Veronica who had not volunteered, the ship sailed from Liverpool to New York City, arriving on December 12, after a trip of over four weeks. The stage-coach to Pittsburgh took another sixty hours. These pioneer sisters, under the leadership of Sister Frances Warde, attended Mass on December 21, 1843, and deemed that day the founding day of the Sisters of Mercy in America. They established their motherhouse on Penn Avenue and began their work at once in a time of anti-Catholic sentiment and prejudice against the Irish immigrants in America.

Their first chore was to minister to the sick, and six of those sisters could be found on the streets of Pittsburgh ministering to those in need. Sister Veronica stayed behind to greet those who came to the motherhouse for assistance, a job she performed with compassion

MOTHER MCAULEY & THE Sisters of

BY HEIDI LUCIA



"The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches."

(Matthew 13:31-32)





PIONEERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

and humor for 40 years. On January 1, 1847, the Sisters of Mercy opened Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh, which still exists today. It was the first Catholic hospital in the world and the first hospital west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The sisters also quickly expanded into education. They founded academies for grades 1-12, laying the groundwork for Catholic education in the region. Because Duquesne University did not admit women at the time, the goal to provide higher education for young women led to the founding of Mount Mercy College, now Carlow University, in 1929 with 24 students, 5 staff, no building, and no resources. The women attended classes in the motherhouse.

Meanwhile, the Diocese of Erie had been spun off from the Pittsburgh Diocese in 1853. With the chaos and sudden growth of this area during the oil boom, help was needed in Titusville. Six Sisters of Mercy were sent from Pittsburgh in 1870 to set up schools and address the needs of people in this region. They opened St. Joseph Academy in Titusville with approximately 400 students.

In Franklin in 1894, Father McCloskey built a school and invited seven Sisters of Mercy here to establish Sacred Heart Academy. The school was split between the sisters' residence and the classrooms

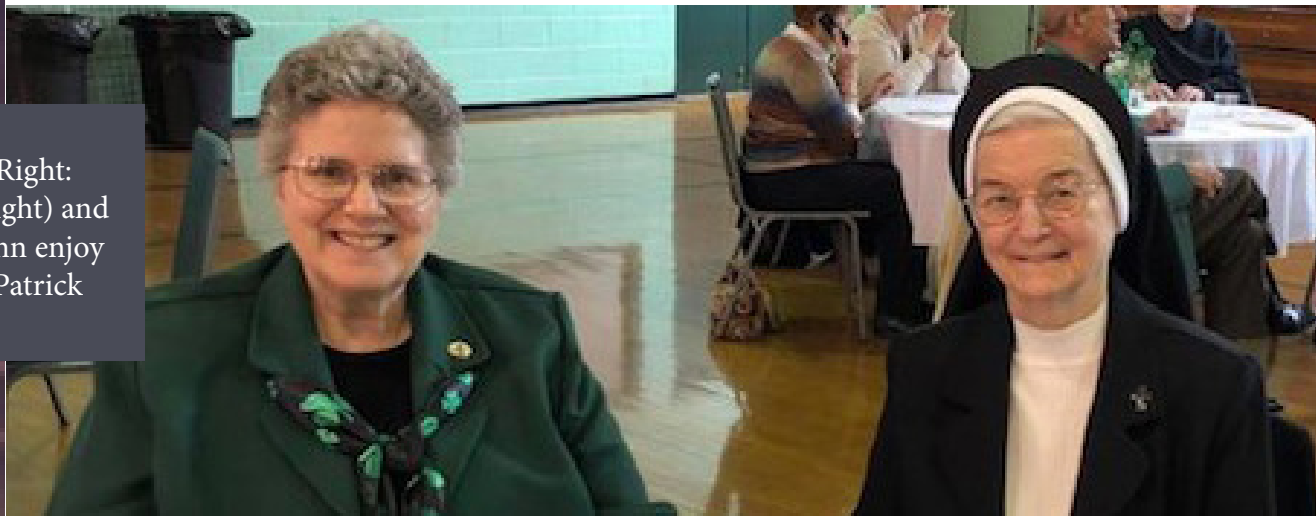
for students in grades 1-11. It wasn't until the 1950s that the sisters moved into the Liberty Street convent, capable of housing eight sisters, which allowed for more room for students at the school. A fourth year of high school was added and the first class graduated in 1952, but the following year the high school section was closed due to crowded conditions and the lack of funds to add additional space. The sisters continued their work in the elementary school which then was renamed St. Patrick School.

By the centennial in 1994, only two sisters remained. The convent had moved to 10th Street in 1985, and the teachers were mainly lay teachers. Sister Mary Ann Bader served as principal, and Sister Mary Felice Duska taught music lessons. The following summer, these two sisters returned to Erie, ending the service of the Sisters of Mercy in our area.

The tale of the Sisters of Mercy began in Ireland with the great faith, resilience, and courage of Catherine McAuley, and today, through God's intercession in her life, the sisters can be found in thirty countries around the world. Within the Diocese of Erie, the sisters continued the work of education by establishing many schools in small mining towns and other locations throughout our diocese including DuBois, Greenville, and Corry. They started Mercyhurst Seminary (high school) and College (now a university) and elementary schools such as St. Luke and St. George in Erie.

The charism of the Sisters of Mercy will always remain in the hearts of those whose lives they have touched. Their belief in a just and merciful world is alive in the students, teachers, leaders, and families who have encountered these strong and courageous women. As Catherine McAuley put it, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

Pictured at Right:
Sister Felice (right) and
Sister Mary Ann enjoy
a visit to St. Patrick



Irish • Spirit •

Educators remember St. Patrick School

Every few months, up to twenty old friends gather at a local restaurant. Their happy chatter is punctuated by delighted shrieks as each familiar face enters the room. They pass around yellowed photographs, chuckling about the clothes and hairstyles they wore back then. The scene is reminiscent of a group of (well-mannered but slightly rowdy) friends huddled around a school cafeteria table. For the retired members of the St. Patrick School faculty and staff, this lunch tradition is a continuation of a special time in their lives and solidifies the bonds they formed while educating the children of our area.

lot of hands-on [lessons] and I have very fond memories of that because the kids were challenged.” Tiffany Crisman remembered, “You lived your religion every day and you got to share that religion with your students. We had special services at Christmastime over in the church and the kids did readings and it was just a beautiful atmosphere. Those are probably the most special days of my teaching career.”

Despite the fond memories, this group is not stuck in the past. They have all enjoyed years of active and fulfilling retirement, and many of the former teachers are still active in St. Patrick Parish. Heidi Lucia, who began teaching computer classes for the school in 1985 and now helps with the parish social media pages, noted “I’m still taking care of technology in retirement, so I’m not really gone!” Many of the ladies spent years providing childcare to their grandchildren as they grew, and some are now enjoying great-grandchildren. Brenda Zimmerman loves “hunting and fishing and camping, and I’m just enjoying life!” Rosemary Estok is enjoying a pleasurable retirement that includes “a lot of reading, going out to eat too much, and I’m going to start exercising!” Carol Long has approached retirement with the enthusiasm and vigor that she brought to her long stint as principal: “I’m playing 500 Bid like a manic. I’m in a book club which I’ve always wanted to do. And I’m pretty much addicted to jigsaw puzzles.”



Prompted to share their favorite memories of St. Patrick School, the ladies had no trouble recounting impactful moments. Brenda O’Polka joked, “My very worst nightmare was that 4-letter word - MILK. I had to count the milk money and get it ordered and in the refrigerator and it was never-ending!” Brenda Zimmerman referenced one of school’s long-lasting artifacts, “When we did the school quilt, we had each of the families do their section. That was a very fond memory, seeing that up for years in the hallway.” Cathy Benvenuti remembered organizing biennial student trips to SeaWorld in Ohio: “It was wonderful because it was before the park opened and they actually taught the kids about how they trained the animals. We did a

After the reminiscing, discussion turned to the lasting legacy of St. Patrick School. Heidi Lucia noted, “I think you’re going to hear ‘family’ a lot.” Carol Long echoed this, “the lasting legacy will always be ‘family.’ There have been so many students who have approached me to say, ‘Here’s what I remember. I’m so glad you did this. Thank you for helping me with that. You prepared us for college.” Diane Jackson reflected on the the dedication of the women encircling the table, “The lasting legacy of St. Patrick School was, honestly, the devotion of these teachers who spent all their time and effort to help all those children. I think everybody could feel it.”

Saint Patrick School may have closed its doors, but for those who taught and learned within its walls, its spirit lives on in faith, family, and lifelong friendships.

Brenda Zimmerman

SPS: 1985-1997

"All three of my children went to SPS. It was a wonderful experience. It was always a family atmosphere."

Rosemary Estok

SPS: 1989-2018

"What is special about St. Pat's is the concern for the students. They were #1. The teachers would often stay after school or use their lunch time to help any students who were having a particular problem."

Heidi Lucia

SPS: 1985-2015

"I loved the respectful atmosphere of the classrooms. From mouse skills in kindergarten to programming and math competitions in the older grades, working with SPS students was a joy."

Carol Long

SPS: 1970 - 2019

"What made St. Patrick special and unique is that we paid attention to the whole child. I remember parents saying to us 'I trust you.' I've never forgotten that. Later in life, the kids appreciated what we did."

Cathy Benvenuti

SPS: 1972-73; 1984-96

"When I think of St. Pat's, I think of an atmosphere that was so conducive to learning. My children went there and some of their friends from grade school are still their friends today. That was a very special place and a very special time."

Paula Klinger

SPS: 1975-2020

"What makes St. Patrick's special and unique is that it's a Sisters of Mercy school. The spirit of the Sisters is still present in that building."



Diane Jackson

SPS: Late 70's-early 80's

"St. Pat's was special and unique as a school. The parents were very cooperative and stood behind you. They just knew you were doing the best you could for them."

Barbara Behringer

SPS: 1976-77

"My fondest memories are of the kids and the people I met while I worked there. I worked with Sr. Josephine a lot. I really enjoyed it."

Brenda O'Polka

SPS: 2000-2004

"I worked as the secretary at St. Pat's, and it was one of the best places I have ever worked. All the teachers were so devoted to their classrooms and the kids."

Tiffany Chrisman

SPS: 1977-1988

"Some of us were students at St. Pat's and then became teachers. I taught first grade where Sr. Judith taught me first grade."

Mary Ann Williams

SPS: 1980's

"I taught 5th grade, and all of my children went to St. Patty's. One of my favorite things was Catholic Schools Week."

The best arguments for Catholic schools are its graduates. One such example is a young woman, who in 2008 was finishing her 8th grade year at a small town Catholic elementary school. Her graduating class was an authentically good group of kids. Some of her peers were engaged in community service, while others took an active role in the church. If anything set this young woman apart from her peers, it was her excellence in academics and athletics. If you were to poll anybody at the time and ask them if they'd pick her to make the most progress in the spiritual life over the next four years and really embrace the Catholic Faith, you'd probably have your fair share of skeptics, doubters, and naysayers as some of her peers seemed to have an edge in that category.

However, she chose to attend the Catholic high school located in the neighboring town while many of her peers decided to attend the local public high school. Over the next four years the young lady had religion classes every day. Faith and religion were also incorporated into her other studies as well. The school had a chapel and she, along with a group of students, gathered to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy every day before lunch. She also attended the monthly praise and worship nights at the school and participated in the Catholic Heart Work Camps every summer. Finally, her fellow students encouraged her to attend a Divine Mercy TEC retreat in Erie, which she did, and as a result she worked on several of the retreats afterwards as part of a team.

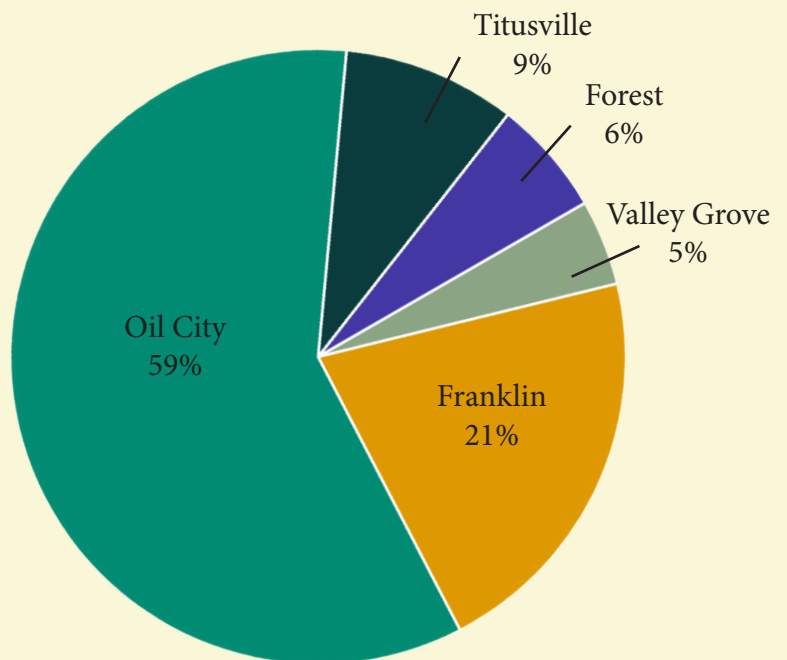
The young lady did in fact grow and flourish in her faith in ways that her former classmates did not, because of the positive influence, the opportunities, and the Christ-centered environment fostered at the Catholic school.

I share that story with you not to prove a point or to win a debate, for one example does not an argument make. However, as I said, the best arguments for Catholic education are its graduates, and the story of this young girl highlights the various ways that Catholic education and Catholic schools can impact, influence, and support students in their faith and their practice of religion.



MAKING A *D*ifference

St. Stephen Student Population
by Home School District



“Our mission is clear: to help ultimately reach heaven.”

CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION: Importance IN VENANGO COUNTY

By Rev. James C. Campbell

YOU'RE INVITED

★ November 2, 2025

St. Stephen School Soup Fest
11:30am - 2:30pm

★ December 6, 2025

Breakfast with Santa
9:00am - Noon

★ January 31, 2026

Reverse Raffle
Seneca Volunteer Fire Dept.
5:30pm - 11:00pm

★ March 21, 2026

A Knight to Remember Gala

214 REED STREET
OIL CITY
(814) 677-3035

There is an advantage to Catholic education apart from small class sizes and the ability to know and to interact with students on a one-to-one basis to achieve academic goals and objectives. That difference can be summed up in one word - God.

That advantage is realized when faith, prayer, and the sacraments are not simply incorporated into student life, but imbue every aspect of learning, study, relationship, involvement, and interaction - bearing fruit in praxis.

The Supreme Court rulings in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v Schempp* (1963) declared school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading unconstitutional and helped to solidify the secularization of public schools in America.

When interviewing Katie Chandley, the current principal of St. Stephen School, she spoke of her “strong beliefs and convictions” regarding the importance of Catholic schools. She highlighted the role Catholic schools play in “evangelization” and how vital and important that role is in “supporting families, bringing about change, and impacting and forming society.”

She said that in this current milieu the need for Catholic schools is ever more evident as families look for allies and partners to support, help, and assist in an environment that can be difficult to navigate on one's own and that is becoming increasingly secular.

Throughout its history St. Patrick Church has been a strong proponent of Catholic education and has supplemented the cost of Catholic education to the tune of millions of dollars. It continues to provide tens of thousands of dollars each year to St. Stephen School through the diocesan annual assessment. In addition, St. Patrick Church has a fund to assist its parishioners with the cost of tuition and has given families in need up to a thousand dollars each year in tuition assistance.

We are happy to continue our support of Catholic education and thank the administration and staff of St. Stephen School for all that they do to continue the legacy of Catholic education in the Venango County region.

students grow in faith and

Katie Chandley, Principal of St. Stephen School

THE HEART OF



Claire Persing (pictured below), 16, daughter of Melissa and DJ Persing, uses some of her extra time to explore career options by shadowing those who are holding positions that she finds of interest. Her love of music has blossomed into her teaching guitar at a Titusville studio two afternoons a week, an option that wouldn't be possible if she were in public school.

BY SUE HILTON

A teenaged girl sits at her family's dining room table, interacting enthusiastically with her teacher and classmates through her computer via a live lesson. A toddler moves a wooden piece representing a temple on a model of the city of Jerusalem as he learns size and shape through a story about the life of Jesus. A group of parents use their skills and expertise to provide a rich and thorough education for their children from birth through secondary school. A young mother uses a series of books about the saints that also provides her daughter with all she needs to gain basic reading skills.

These are among the various ways that several families of St. Patrick Parish are choosing to home-school their children. These parents all share a keen sense of their own identities and feel deeply their duty and responsibility to provide education to their children. Within them is a deep faith and a devotion to prayer. Incorporating this faith into every aspect of their lives, including their children's intellectual and character development, is critically important. They believe that an occupation is meant to support one's religious voca-



HOME SCHOOLING

tion, rather than the goal of public education to promote worldly success.

One model includes ten families who work together to cover the subject matters required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to verify grade advancement and to certify graduation. These requirements are among the most demanding in the country, but as Carrie Kolesar says, it demonstrates that their students are meeting and quite often exceeding these standards. Carrie, her sister Alethea Burkett and other siblings, children of Wayne and Patty Hepler, along with other families, have worked through this group for many years. Now students and parents meet Tuesdays and Thursdays for prescribed lessons for various age groups, starting the day together with Morning Prayer at the St. Thomas More House of Prayer. Other days are spent on homework, review, other subjects, learning activities and specialized topics.

But there are a few other families who have chosen to work without this structure. They might use the online lessons of Seton Home Schooling or Home School Connections, both of which are Catholic-based curricula. They find that learning opportunities are everywhere around them.

Daily regimens of work and prayer are the most important aspects of their day,

but they also report that the gift of flexibility is critical. The time that would have been spent on leaving home, traveling to school, and walking through the daily schedule is now spent on intense school work, interaction with online and/or recorded classes, homework and specific goals. Annie Lindemuth conducts learning activities that are completely meshed together with the needs of her family, and is grateful that she can work with her young children's sleep schedule. Rebecca Traud is just this year truly beginning home-schooling as her oldest daughter is now of kindergarten age, but they have already been using the Children's Bible, books about the saints, and saying the Rosary together as ways to incorporate their faith into their children's learning.

These families use the whole day as time devoted to education, perhaps using food preparation time as a way to teach

math or having one parent do a class while the other prepares supper. Meeting the needs of each individual child is much easier through home-schooling, as the families have discovered.

Is it easy? Are families certain that it's the best choice? While many expressed that they have experienced concern and find it's not always easy, each of the families finds satisfaction and joy in the decision to home-school their children. Says Melissa Persing, "It's been the best thing for our family."

PROVERBS 1:8-9:

"LISTEN, MY SON, TO YOUR
FATHER'S INSTRUCTION
AND DO NOT FORSAKE YOUR
MOTHER'S TEACHING. THEY
ARE A GARLAND TO GRACE
YOUR HEAD AND A CHAIN TO
ADORN YOUR NECK."



On Sunday

morning, the school halls are filled with the voices of excited, enthusiastic children from kindergarten through fifth grade as they take part in their faith formation classes. And then later, at noon, sixteen young people in grades 6-9 spend two hours with Father James as they grow in their love for God, for Jesus, for the Sacraments and the Catholic Church. The theme for this year is the Bible, so much of the instruction, activity and homework will involve the Bible.

The Faith Formation program involves 49 students, five teachers, Father James and coordinator Paula Klinger. She's the one who sets the schedule, secures the materials, registers the students and oversees the required audits from the Diocese which verify that the courses meet their standards. She finds great joy in observing the excitement that these young students bring to their classes.

The goals of the program are to prepare students from their earliest introduction to God, as kindergartners, to understand that there is a God who is their Creator and loving Father, to the older grades where they grow in both intellect and character to live vibrant lives rooted in Catholic principles.

In addition to classes, the students participate in other ways, including caroling at Christmas to shut-ins and nursing home residents, through Valentine's Day and Easter where music and other activities bring joy to the homebound.

Father James works with grades 6-9, where his time with them, from 12-2 pm every other Sunday, includes instruction with interaction, an activity and finishing with prayer. He finds working with these young people critical. Father explained,

"I want to equip them with the intellectual tools to stand strong in the faith and not to be blown about like reeds in the wind or swept away by the ever changing current of the Spirit of the Age."



GROWING TOGETHER



The schedule for K-5 is three classes each month. They use a Diocesan curriculum and some textbooks, including *Blessed* by Dynamic Catholic for grades 2-3, and *Finding God* by Loyola Press for grades 4-5.

Teachers for this 2025-2026 year are: Grades K-1: Beth Wachob and Katie McNulty; Grade 2: Lisa Smith; Grade 3: Heath Garcia; and Grades 4-5: Jonathan Fiscus. Katie and Beth say that working with these young children is a blessing. The excitement the children show when they can recite a prayer is contagious. Says Katie,

"It's so special to be a part of the foundation of their faith, and I am growing in my own faith as a result."



ETHER IN FAITH



BY
SUE
HILTON

Other children are able to find a different path to full participation in the Catholic faith. The Order of Christian Initiation of Children (OCIC) is an option for children who have not been provided any Catholic education and have reached the age of 8. This program seeks to prepare young students to participate in the sacraments from baptism through confirmation. Beth Wachob taught this class last year with one young person receiving the sacraments at Easter in 2025. Beth says it was very meaningful to watch this young girl thrive through her experience. This program provides instruction in many areas to students including Scripture, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Mass, the Saints, and all of the other topics necessary to become fully Catholic. This program is available when necessary to help a young person in this situation.



ADULT EDUCATION

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is a developmental program designed to bring adults who are not Catholic into full membership in the church. Current Catholics are also welcome to participate in this deep enrichment in the Catholic faith. At St. Patrick, Deacon Dick O'Polka has been teaching the class for a few years, and will be doing so again for the 2025-2026 year. Meeting every other Thursday evening for an hour and a half, he will be leading discussions based on a series of videos. Using a curriculum developed by Symbolon, the videos address a wide variety of topics and include speakers from both the Augustine Institute and Franciscan University, scholars from a rich background in Biblical and theological studies. He will supplement the classes with material from the catechism, the Bible and the books he reads to enrich his own understanding. This year the discussions will begin with the Nicene Creed.

Deacon O'Polka finds great satisfaction in both the preparation and delivery of these classes. "I believe firmly that ours is the true church founded by Jesus," he said. "Helping people to become Catholic or to become better Catholics is very meaningful to me." He recently sponsored Christopher Giebner (pictured), who completed OCIA and entered the church in August. Welcome, Chris!

GRACE AT WORK



Katie Ewing
4th Grade Teacher
Hasson Heights Elementary in Oil City

Catholic teaching stresses that every person is created in God's image. In a public school, that translates into treating each student with compassion, fairness, and respect, regardless of background or belief, and taking each day head on, knowing God is beside me and my students when we need Him most.

A number of St. Patrick Parishioners support the children of the region as educators in the local public schools. Lorica reached out to these public servants to find out how their Catholic faith influences the way they carry out their professions.

Background Photo:
Dr. John Karian

Elizabeth Wachob
Speech-Language Pathologist
Riverview IU6

I try to walk alongside families in their role as first teachers, working together with them while looking to Our Blessed Mother as a model of patience and kindness. She reminds me to approach every child and family with compassion, even when progress takes time.



Kaitlyn Justice
Speech-Language Pathologist
Riverview IU6

My faith influences my teaching by inspiring me to be empathetic and understanding of my students and their families.



Nick Traud
Secondary Chemistry/Physics Teacher
Franklin Jr/Sr High

I try to apply my faith at school by frequently thinking about the classic phrase "What would Jesus do?" The keyword is "do." Since you can't simply preach the Gospels during a lesson, I try to share Christ in my actions toward students and staff alike by showing compassion, forgiveness, graciousness, and patience.



Ryan Umbenhaur
Assistant Principal
Cranberry Elementary

I treat all of the students with respect and fairness, so that they know I believe in their potential and have a willingness to help them become the best version of themselves even when the outcome isn't successful on the first attempt. I try to demonstrate that being kind and empathetic to others is something that we should all do in our daily interactions.



Lisa Mulholland
4th Grade Teacher
Valley Grove Elementary

My faith guides me in being a positive example to my students from my own love of learning. Like a garden, students grow and bloom. By nurturing learning, they can see their potential now and in the future.



Margaret Janidlo
Kindergarten Teacher
Central Elementary

I am not permitted to teach about Christ directly, so I teach by example, striving to show the children about being respectful, responsible, grateful, and empathetic and sharing tools of cooperation, courage, and honesty for them to utilize in their own unique lives.



YOUTH GROUP PILGRIMAGE: *Washington, DC*

This past July, the St. Patrick Youth Group organized a faith-filled pilgrimage to our nation's capital. The week started with a tour of Arlington National Cemetery led by Fr. James' brother, Captain Fr. Joseph Campbell, who has served as the cemetery chaplain for the past couple of years. Fr. Joe's experience and knowledge added a unique perspective to the tour, which highlighted important sites within the cemetery and included special behind-the-scenes experiences.

On the second day of the pilgrimage, the group gathered for Mass within the awe-inspiring Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, followed by a tour explaining the spiritual significance of the Basilica's architectural beauty. The group journeyed by foot to the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, which contains replicas built to the exact specifications of key locations in Christ's Passion, including the cross and tomb.

After hot days filled with soul-touching experiences, the pilgrims relaxed and rested their feet at restaurants in Old Town Alexandria and Georgetown. The last day of the visit was spent exploring the museums and monuments of the National Mall before journeying home to Franklin.

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