Proclaiming the Good News
Catholic School Updates

Good news stories are happening in Catholic schools across the country! Let NCEA know what is happening with your school so that we may share on NCEA Talk, social media and in the pages of Momentum. Visit www.NCEA.org/shareyourstory to submit your good news today!

MICHIGAN
Diocese of Marquette

Sadly, Holy Name Catholic High School in Escanaba, MI closed its doors in 1971. But recently it has become abundantly clear that there is a strong demand for an alternative to a strictly secular education: a solid Catholic high school education.

"When is Holy Name going to have a high school again?" was the question most frequently asked of Principal Joe Carlson. Mr. Carlson knew that statistics show that only five percent of youth who do not attend a Catholic high school remain Sunday Mass attendees as adults; whereas, that percentage jumps up to 39 percent for those who attend Catholic high school. Mr. Carlson, with the support of a grassroots group of parents, set about to explore the reopening of Holy Name High School.

In this 2020-2021 school year, the doors reopened at Holy Name Catholic High School. The school's vision is to continue to immerse students in the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith and culture by offering a four-year Catholic high school. Holy Name provides Christ-centered and unique, yet time-honored education through an Integrated Classical Catholic Curriculum, as well as strong athletic and fine arts programs in partnership with area schools.

The doors opened to freshmen and sophomores for the 2020-2021 academic school year. Grades incrementally will be added each year, along with expansion of the current school to house the new high school classrooms. The Catholic high school will be open to all students throughout the Upper Peninsula, with a potential boarding program, as well as foreign exchange students.

Mr. Carlson makes sure Holy Name lives by his words: "We only get one chance to raise our children. Let's give them the best fighting chance at keeping their faith so we can enjoy eternity together!"

Diocese of Kalamazoo

In today's world, schools, teachers, students and their families must often shift the way they provide and receive education at a moment's notice. Lake Michigan Catholic School's innovative "Live Classroom" model provides a seamless way for students to learn from anywhere.

"While the majority of LMC students returned to full-time on-campus learning this year, there have been instances where we've had to pivot. That's the very reason we created our Live Classroom model," says LMC Middle/High School Principal James White. "Whether a family chooses to keep their kids home for health reasons or the State makes a change in protocols, we can provide our families with high-quality remote learning."

In LMC's Live Classroom model, lessons are livestreamed for remote students, who follow the schools' daily schedules from home. The Live Classroom model has been a collaborative effort between teachers, students and their families to ensure it is user-friendly, flexible and works directly with Google Classroom, their common teaching and learning platform.

"Our goal has been to make a virtual education
experience as seamless as possible and we believe our Live Classroom model accomplishes that,” says LMC Elementary School Principal Larry Hoskins. “This is a challenging time for everyone; however, we appreciate the confidence and trust our families have in our schools. We work hard every day to make sure we’re nourishing every student mind, body and soul, whether learning in-person or virtually.”

If a student must participate in virtual learning, their teacher receives 24 hours notice, which gives them time to prepare a take-home packet, including lesson information, assignments and any project materials the classroom will be using during that time. This allows the students to truly feel a part of the class.

“Our kids have been virtual all school year,” says Andrew Lewis, LMC parent. “The Live Classroom model has allowed them to engage directly with their teachers and friends. They are still part of day-to-day class, not just taking online digital classes. Of course, technology is helpful, however, it is the teachers and staff, making the commitment to LMC families, that have made a difference.”

UTAH
Diocese of Salt Lake City

Sometimes we forget, may be unsure of, or don't get to see the profound effect our schools and communities have for families and students, even many years after graduation. Two beautiful reminders of the lifelong, enduring value of our Catholic school faith community occurred this fall. First, we had a visit from a former student and his mother. Second, we received a very special piece of art from a current family.

Tom Gourde, one of 11 siblings who all graduated from Saint Olaf Catholic School, stopped in, bringing his mother to re-visit the campus after many years. Midge Gourde, a 92-year-old mother and grandmother, reminded us that she had students attending Saint Olaf from the first opening day in September 1960 through the early 1990s. They were committed and actively involved for more than 30 years at Saint Olaf Catholic School. It was affirming to talk with Midge and Tom, reminiscing as we pulled out old class picture albums and swapped stories. Midge’s family story remains relatable, especially as current parents often question both their ability to, and the value of sending their children to Catholic school. The Gourdes remain faithful to this day, even 60 years later.

Midge credits a large part of her children's lifelong successes to Saint Olaf Catholic School. With faith always as the center, they were taught the values of strength and endurance (our motto), aiding them as they pursued challenging careers and faced life's obstacles. Service and stewardship were consistently modelled. Now, the next generation are graduating from Catholic schools. Midge feels that because her children participated in our unique Saint Olaf recipe for Catholic education, they have each become accomplished, thoughtful and kind people. Tom added that his mother credits the school for helping lay the moral foundation and compass that has guided the children and now grandchildren in their family. Midge is a remarkable woman of faith. In 2018, the family was recognized in the Utah Intermountain Catholic article, Family boasts 22 graduates of Utah Catholic schools. In recognition of what they received at our school, Tom Gourde asked to establish an endowment for student scholarships at Saint Olaf in the name of his parents Midge and Richard Gourde. Midge deeply desires that Saint Olaf Catholic education and community remain available to all families, regardless of ability to pay. We are humbled by this generous gift and pray that we remain as committed as the Gourde family to the distinct and ongoing educational recipe we offer, and to the stewardship of our school community. What a legacy of faith and commitment!

This fall, the school also received a large custom made mission cross displayed at the front of the building. Our principal had discussed the historical meaning of a mission cross (placed at a site where the Gospel is shared) at a Home and School Meeting. A parent at our school, an artist and metal fabricator by trade, designed, created and donated this art piece because of what the school has meant to his family. He and his wife loved the significance of a mission cross representing the