



Office of the Principal

Saint Rose Academy,
a home of exceptional
intellectual and spiritual
formation,
challenges its children
to embrace truth,
uphold goodness,
and contemplate beauty
in the Dominican
Catholic tradition.

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Dear Saint Rose Academy Families,

Welcome back! These words take on a new meaning after such an unusual school year as we just experienced. I am delighted to welcome each of you, previous and new families, to our new year. May it truly be a renewal in all areas of our lives from our life of faith to our relationships to our daily tasks as we participate in this work of formation of souls at Saint Rose. I pray that we may each discern, with the help of the Lord, which area of our lives is most in need of renewal after this previous year of “survival”. It can be for each of us a “back to basics” experience. We may ask ourselves: what does it mean to be a faithful Christian? A supportive parent? A generous neighbor? For my part, I will be returning to those foundational elements of administration and leadership that will allow me to serve you and your children well this year and for years to come.

Back-to-Basics: A Year of Faith

As our guide through this year, we will let Saint Paul’s words to the Ephesians (3:17) renew our lives of faith. In studying the writings of Saint Paul this summer, I learned that when Paul spoke of *faith*, the word he used indicates *faithfulness* (defined as loyalty and trustworthiness in relationships). So this quote from Ephesians 3:17 can be thought of in two ways. Our belief and trust in God allows Him to dwell within us but also our *fidelity* to Him and letting Him act in us, keeping us faithful to Him, allows Him to dwell within our hearts as well. This will be our **theme** for this school year.

Several years ago, our Sisters developed a *Virtues in Practice*® program for teaching the virtues to children (and adults!). In a 3-year cycle, the theological virtues (given to us by God in Baptism) of faith, hope, and love are presented with a different supporting virtue each month. In various grade levels, age-appropriate definitions are learned, virtues are acted out, and saints are studied who lived that virtue to a heroic degree. The Parent Guide will be given out at the Parent Open House on Thursday, September 9 so that you can follow along and reinforce the lessons and projects at home with your children. All of the materials are available on the [Nashville Dominican website](#) including the [Parent Guide](#) and Student Packets for each grade level. I pray that this year of faith will truly renew our belief in the God who believes in and loves each of us.

This Year of Faith at Saint Rose coincides with Bishop Raica’s Year of the Eucharist and of the Parish. We encourage each family to renew their own devotion to the Eucharist and to their parish, making it a place where faith is shared and fostered. **On the 2nd Sunday of each month, we are encouraging our children to wear their uniforms**



to their church as a visible reminder to everyone there that many families continue to choose Catholic education. *The children that wear their uniform on the 2nd Sunday may come out of uniform on Monday to school!*

I have asked **Bishop Raica** to celebrate a Mass for our faculty on August 4. Though we are a school owned and operated by the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia and are under the jurisdiction of Mother Anna Grace and the General Council in Nashville, we carry out the teaching authority of Bishop Raica in his Diocese. It is my hope and desire that we can begin our year under his authority and with his blessing. Also, I feel called this year to make a profession of faith in his presence by simply reciting the Apostles' Creed. I will also read a [Statement of Fidelity](#) in order to reiterate to our Bishop that I will be faithful in upholding the truths of the Catholic faith and support my teachers in their teaching of the faith to our children. In sending your children to a Catholic school, you are right to expect that the children, faculty, and staff will be formed in the truths of the faith. The gift of faith is guarded, cherished, and handed on generously here at Saint Rose Academy. We commit to giving nothing less than the faith in its fullness.

Back-to-Basics: Post-Covid Schooling

There are many lessons we learned last year from how to “read” the emotions in eyes to how students will react when offered hand sanitizer after they just washed their hands. Some of the lessons are helpful for maintaining health standards going forward. Please see our new guidelines for this coming year:

1. Facial coverings are welcome to be worn by students and by staff but will not be required as the general rule at this time.
2. Students and faculty/staff diagnosed with Covid-19 will be required to quarantine for the recommended time as instructed by their doctors at the time of diagnosis.
3. Vaccination is not required for eligible students or staff.
4. Handwashing, hand sanitization, and other hygiene measures will continue throughout the school day.
5. Regular cleaning and disinfection will occur throughout the school day and after school.
6. Monitoring of updated guidance and/or health orders from the CDC, ADPH, local health departments, as well as the current health situation in the geographic region of the Diocese of Birmingham may result in updates and revisions to this guidance throughout the school year.

We ask that our families to renew their commitment to partnering with us in adhering to the **policies** we set forth in our handbooks. We would like all uniforms to be just that: uniform! One of the areas we are interested in “scaling back” now that remote learning is no longer offered is the amount of screen time our children are exposed to each day. A few years ago, we pleaded with families to band together and commit as a class of parents to refrain from giving your children cell phones until 8th (or even 9th) grade. We renew this plea. We can honestly say that the negative impact far outweighs any positive effects of children having phones while in elementary school. From sleep deprivation to ADHD to anxiety, our children are simply not made to process so much information and “connect” with so many people in such superficial ways at this formative stage of their lives. I can promise you that the middle school years will be so much more manageable and peaceful without the added stress and heartache that cell phones bring to pre-teens.

Our **gym floor** is being repaired and will not be available for us to use at the beginning of the school year until **September**. Please keep this in your prayers. Many areas of the school have been repaired this summer and Saint Joseph is taking good care of us through some generous workers. Thank you for your patience with the construction timeline! Know that you have been and will remain in my daily prayers.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Mary Juliana, O.P.