

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Alumni News

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A newsletter published for parents, alumni and friends of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

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From the Principal's Desk

Pope Francis declared 2015 the Year of Consecrated Life. In his message the Pope stated that the aims of the year would be “to look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion and embrace the future with hope.” As a school and parish community, these words unfold for us our origins and rich history cemented by the School Sisters of Saint Francis. During the summer, we installed a beautiful bronze statue of a Sister of Saint Francis commissioned by a generous alumna. The statue stands in the front of our school, together with a plaque listing the names of the 94 Sisters who taught at Our Lady of Lourdes between 1941 and 1979. On the morning of Friday, September 11, we will honor the Sisters who gave so much to the children and parish of Lourdes. We will begin the day with Mass at 9 am, followed by the formal statue dedication at 10 am and a reception immediately following. If you would like to take a tour of the school, we will have students available to show you around. We’ve invited the Sisters of Saint Francis from Glen Riddle, PA to join us for this special celebration. It would be a fitting tribute to the Sisters if our alumni honored their service by participating in this special event. Please RSVP by September 4 to 301-654-5376 or receptionist@bethesda-lourdes.org.

The graceful statue is a reminder of the outstanding education these hardworking, dedicated Sisters gave the children of Lourdes. The legacy of teaching that began with the Sisters continues today with the lay teachers we have at Our Lady of Lourdes. Day in and day out, they work together with the parents and families of Lourdes to raise our children to be young men and women of faith, service and excellence. Ardently embracing the Pope’s words and continuing the legacy of the Sisters, our teachers challenge their students to live in the present each day, to offer a concrete model of community that reverences each person and their gifts and to look for the face of God in one another.

We have teachers who arrive to school at 6 am to begin preparations and finalize lessons plans for the day ahead. Our teachers stay long after the school bell has rung to tutor, mentor and coach our children. They come in on their days off, spend their weekends coaching soccer and basketball games, sacrifice their holidays to attend professional development conferences and spend their vacations researching new text books, fun activities and learning strategies to motivate their students. Like the Sisters of Saint Francis who came before them, our teachers are in the business of guiding and teaching children who will “embrace the future with hope.” For them teaching is more than a career choice and more than a job, it’s a vocation.



If you are unable to attend the September 11 event, please send us your pictures, memories and letters about the Sisters of Saint Francis and your time at Lourdes so that we may share them with the Sisters on this special day. We will be creating a commemorative program after the dedication, and we will be happy to share a copy with you. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Mass and statue dedication on September 11.

God bless you and your family,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Patricia McGann".

Patricia McGann, Principal



Alumni Share Their Memories of the School Sisters of Saint Francis



A few Lourdes Alumni reflect upon the undeniable impact the Sisters had on them and on their Lourdes education:

There is a family story regarding Sr. Victor and my brother Charlie. The summer between sixth and seventh grades, Charlie was in a bike accident and lost his two permanent front teeth. He wore a dental appliance to replace them. By the time he got to eighth grade, the appliance needed to be replaced as he and his mouth were growing so rapidly that the dental appliance was loose. As a nervous habit, he used to click his teeth in and out. Sr. Victor had a reputation for being very strict and so when she noticed my brother with something in his mouth, thinking that it was gum or some such other forbidden object, she asked him what it was. He answered “My teeth, Sister” so she asked him again and got the same answer. She thought he was being smart, so she asked him to come up to her desk and put what was in his mouth there, which he did. She was quite embarrassed when he placed his dental appliance with his two front teeth there and asked him to put them back in his mouth and return to his seat. Later that day she called my parents to apologize. My brother Charlie was killed in Vietnam just before his 24th birthday so this story has lived on with our memories of him.

Harriet Flott Smiley, Lourdes Class of 1956

My favorite Sr. Jarlath quote was, “Carve the name of the one you love in your heart, not in my desk!” Her Irish brogue only really came out when she was giving a spelling test so we couldn’t understand a word she said.

Kim McGettigan Lynch, Lourdes Class of 1974

The Sisters used to tell me, “You don’t need to sing, you can play the tambourine...”

Joe Busch, Lourdes Class of 1974

I remember Sister Columnkill explaining the purpose of the decimal point by telling us, “You could put zeros after the decimal point from here to Jericho and it wouldn’t mean a thing.” Of course, I figured Jericho was someplace north of Rockville.

Kevin Hymel, Lourdes Class of 1980

Sister Alma Francis Collins was a gifted educator – especially reading. I was known to come home and pronounce certain words with a mild brogue until corrected by my parents. But I could read, do math, and I knew my Baltimore Catechism by heart. And I learned quite a bit about Saint Patrick too!

John (Charlie) Ford, Lourdes Class of 1956

The Lourdes Spirit Runs Deep

We are proud to have alumni whose children and grandchild are current students and recent graduates of Our Lady of Lourdes – Brenda Smith (Brockman), Lourdes Class of 1977 and her son Will, a Lourdes 5th grader; Betsy Sunier (Pfeifer), Lourdes Class of 1982 and her daughter Aimee, a Lourdes 8th grader; and Justin McNerny, Lourdes Class of 1976 and his son Henry, a Lourdes 8th grader. Lourdes is also home to Ben, a rising 4th grader and the grandson of Dr. Peter Coccaro, Lourdes Class of 1956. Clayton and Catherine Kiyonaga are both graduates of Lourdes (2013 and 2015): their dad John attended Lourdes in 1959-1960 and again in 1963-1966. Do your grandchildren attend Lourdes? Did they attend in the last ten years? Let us know, and we will include them in our list!

“Own the Vision” 2015-2016 Annual Fund

The “Own the Vision” Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School Annual Fund is a planned, coordinated, concentrated effort undertaken each year to raise unrestricted gifts to help Lourdes ensure its viability and reach its full potential, as we maintain and enhance the excellence of our Catholic education.

We owe a great deal of thanks to teachers and staff, school parents, parishioners, businesses, friends of the school, alumni and grandparents for their generosity and belief in the mission of Our Lady of Lourdes School. Special thanks go to Our Lady of Lourdes Class of 1953 with four donors. Together, we raised over \$65,000. \$25,000 was set aside for financial aid, including the Collins Scholarship Fund that provides aid for deserving students with exceptional economic challenges. The remaining funds were used to renovate two of the school’s restrooms and to provide continuing professional development for teachers so that they might advance in their field and enhance classroom instruction.

Join us as we kickoff the 2015-2016 Annual Fund with a Cocktail Party on Friday, November 13, 6-8 pm in our school gymnasium. RSVP to 301-654-5376 or receptionist@bethesda-lourdes.org. If you are unable to attend, but would like to donate to our wonderful school, you may make a gift online at <http://bit.ly/ololshop>.



Montgomery County Essay “Justice Under the Law” Essay Contest, 1966

This photo was taken in 1966 in front of the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes Church. The picture features the Montgomery County “Justice Under the Law” Essay Contest winners and runners up, as well as a few Sisters and priests from Lourdes and a representative from the Knights of Columbus.

From left to right: runner up Walter Crowley (Class of ’67), first-place winner Edson G. Case (Class of ’67) and first-place winner Margaret Mary Jones (Class of ’67). Do you recognize the other faces in this photo? Please email the alumni office at alumni@bethesda-lourdes.org.



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School
7500 Pearl Street
Bethesda, MD 20814

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Events

Friday, September 11, 2015, 9 am – School Sisters of Saint Francis Statue Dedication &

Mass Saturday, September 12, 2015, 6 pm – Parish/School Italian Dinner

Wednesday, November 25, 2015, 5 pm – Young Alumni Mass and Social

Friday, November 13, 2015, 6-8 pm – Annual Fund Kickoff Cocktail Party

Tuesday, December 1, 2015 – Open House for Prospective Families

Saturday, December 5, 2015 – Breakfast with Santa

All are invited! Please call the school at 301-654-5376 for more information.

Stay Connected

Follow alumni events and news on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/

LOLALumni. Did you move? Do you have a new email address? Update your contact information at

www.bethesda-lourdes.org/alumni/updates or send an email to alumni@bethesda-lourdes.org.