



The Seraph

Fall 2016

ARCHBISHOP GOMEZ CELEBRATES GRADUATION

Archbishop of Los Angeles Jose Gomez celebrated SMA's Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation this June. The Archbishop's presence brought to a joyful close SMA's first year at its new home.

After celebrating Mass with six other priests, Archbishop Gomez gave the commencement address and conferred diplomas upon the 8th-grade and Senior graduates. In his address, the Archbishop urged the students to pray always, become saints, and change the world by love.

To close the ceremony, the new alumni sang their Alma Mater: "*Crusaders, fight the good fight throughout your future lives. Proclaim the truth with courage knowing Christ is at your side!*" ■

Excerpts from Archbishop Jose Gomez's Commencement Address

God made each one of you for a reason. God made you to be saints! That means God has great expectations for each one of you. He has something that he wants each of you to do in this world – something that no one else can do for him.

Being a saint doesn't mean separating ourselves from the world. It means just the opposite! It means loving God and serving our neighbors right here and right now – in the middle of the world. God wants saints in every area of life. He needs mothers and fathers who are saints. He needs saints in our parishes and schools; saints in corporations and in hospitals and in the media; saints in politics and saints on Wall Street.

On your journey of life – you need to stay close to Jesus. You need to strive every day to be more like him. And the way you do that is through prayer.

If you can, try to get to Mass during the week, not only on Sundays. Daily Mass will really change your life. It's true. It changed my life. Regular Confession, too. It keeps us honest with God.

My brothers and sisters, our society is getting more secular and more hostile to religion. In fact, I think we are entering a period of history in which it's going to be much more difficult to live our Catholic faith. So it's important for you to keep growing deeper in your knowledge of the faith. The Church needs Catholics who know their faith. Who know what we believe and why we believe it. And we need to be able to explain our beliefs and share our faith with others.

The world will be saved by the beauty of the saints. And the saints will save the world by love. And that means you and me.

Most of the "saints" in history are never officially canonized



Founding chaplain of SMA, Fr. Marcos Gonzalez, preached the homily at the Mass celebrating the 8th-grade graduation of his nephew and godson.

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EXCERPTS FROM STUDENT SPEECHES

KAYLA GRIMM - SALUTATORIAN

"George Washington said ... religion and morality are indispensable supports...of political prosperity."

The moral formation that my classmates and I have received here has been the essential part of our experience. We have been taught by the daily example of our teachers, and by the standards of honesty, dedication, and charity to which they held us accountable throughout our four years of high school.

George Washington said "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." Religion and Morality: these are the tools my classmates and I have been given to work with, and these are the tools that work.

If we draw strength from and build upon the moral foundation we have received here, we actually do have the power to save our country and the world.

MAIREAD NORTON - VALEDICTORIAN

"Many valedictory speeches say 'go out and make a difference'...but they neglect the most important question: Why? St. Monica Academy has offered us the answer."

As I was writing this speech, I came across many examples of valedictory speeches. They closed with the usual themes – we have to go out and be leaders, make a difference in society, leave our mark. And the speeches gave good advice on how to do it. But what really struck me as I read through these examples was that they all neglected the most important question: Why?

Ever since my classmates and I walked into Sacred Scripture class on the first day of freshman year, St. Monica Academy has offered us the answer. That same answer has permeated every class, from religion to science. Yes, our accomplishments are good, and something to be proud of. But what SMA has taught us is that our talents are gifts, not to be kept to ourselves, not to be gloried in, but to be shared with others....because they are never just ours. They come from God. That's why we must share them, why we can't keep them to ourselves. And St. Monica's has never left us in doubt of that mandate, whether through Mr. O'Donnell's debates in Apologetics, or Mr. Selmezy's vehement contention that the beauty of God can be found in Calculus. We're convinced, we received the message. Now may God give us the grace to live it.

YEJI CHON - 8TH-GRADE VALEDICTORIAN

"Let us remember the words of Pope John Paul the Great: 'Have no fear of moving into the unknown'"

We have become better because of what we read, what our amazing teachers taught us, and how we took care of each other. We supported one another with smiling, spirited faces, like a true family.

As we begin new adventures and new friendships after middle school, let us remember the words of Pope John Paul the Great: "Have no fear of moving into the unknown. Simply step out fearlessly knowing that I am with you, therefore no harm can befall you; all is very, very well. Do this in complete faith and confidence." Thank you SMA teachers and parents for giving us faith and confidence!

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or recognized by the Church. They are hidden saints. "Saints of the every day." Ordinary Christians living their ordinary lives. Each one of us is called to be one of those "hidden," "every day" saints who change the world by our love.

We change the world person-to-person, one at a time. Beginning with those around us. In our homes, at school, at work. We change people — by the way we live our lives. By being good friends. Not so much by our words, but by our example. By our kindness and thoughtfulness. By our mercy and forgiveness.

So, my young friends — I know God has beautiful things in store for you. Always trust God! He has a beautiful plan for your life!

The entirety of Archbishop Gomez's commencement speech can be read online at www.angelusnews.com/articles/the-most-important-lesson-we-have-to-learn



ST. MONICA ACADEMY CLASS OF 2016

Back to front, left to right:

BAILEY BATTLES: Science Medal winner, Lead Altar Server, Schola choir, graduating with First Honors, attending UCLA.

KAYLA GRIMM: Gold Medalist in the National Latin Exam, Math Medal winner, Director of the Schola choir, Yearbook staff, 1st Team All-League Varsity Basketball, 2nd Team All-League Varsity Softball, Varsity Volleyball, Class Salutatorian, graduating with First Honors, attending Thomas Aquinas College.

MATTHEW GOLBRANSON: Division 1 Soccer Scholarship, Ronald Reagan Leadership Award, 1st Team All-League Varsity Baseball, John Paul II Athlete Award, Member of National Honor Society (NHS) and California Scholarship Federation (CSF), Lead Altar Server, graduating with First Honors, attending Santa Clara University.

ELENA FORD: 1st Team All-League Varsity Basketball, attending Christendom College.

JOSEPH KULDA: Varsity Basketball, attending John Paul the Great University.

THERESE BOLES: Ben Carson Scholarship, CIF Southern Section Division Player of the Year in Varsity Volleyball, Ronald Reagan

Leadership Award, History Medal and English Medal winner, Schola choir, 1st Team All-League Varsity Basketball, 1st Team All-League Varsity Softball, Cardinal Newman Award, Student Council President, graduating with First Honors, attending UCLA.

MICHELLE HALL: 2nd Team All-League Varsity Volleyball, attending Mount San Antonio College.

HANNA SAYEGH: Member of NHS, graduating with Second Honors, attending Azusa Pacific University.

MARY McCARTY: 1st Team All-League Varsity Soccer, Schola choir, Yearbook staff, graduating with First Honors, attending Azusa Pacific University.

SOPHIA VEGA: Varsity Volleyball CIF Championship Game MVP, Cantor and member of Schola choir, Music Medal winner, 2nd Team All-League Varsity Volleyball, 2nd Team All-League Varsity Softball, attending John Paul the Great University.

ROSE GOODWIN: Ronald Reagan Leadership Award, Schola choir, Student Council, 1st Team All-League Varsity Volleyball, graduating with Second Honors, attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

SYLVIA ZEPEDA: Silver Medalist in the National Latin Exam, Cantor and member of Schola choir, Drama Medal winner, graduating with First Honors, attending Thomas Aquinas College.

DANIELA NIEVA: LA County Science Fair Microbiology Division 2nd Place, Archdiocesan Christian Service Award, Gold Medalist in the National Latin Exam, National Merit Commended Scholar and National Hispanic Scholar, Science Medal winner, Member of CSF, Schola choir, graduating with First Honors, attending University of Dallas.

MAIREAD NORTON: 4-time Gold Medalist in the National Latin Exam, Ronald Reagan Leadership Award, Government and Economics Medal, Religion Medal, Latin Medal, Schola choir, Student Council, Yearbook Editor, Member of NHS and CSF, Class Valedictorian, graduating with First Honors, attending Benedictine College.

MIRIAM TALBOT: Yearbook staff, Varsity Cross Country, attending Pasadena City College.

FRANCESCA McCALL: Schola choir, Varsity Volleyball, attending University of Bologna, Italy. ■

15 Years Ago...

In the fall of 2001, a tiny school was born. Highlights of the history of SMA's founding are presented in this modified excerpt from the 15th Anniversary Auction Tribute Book.

St. Monica Academy began gestating in the Fall of 2000, when a handful of families sought a better way to fulfill their mandate as primary educators of their children.

They imagined an authentically Catholic school faithful to the Magisterium, with faith-filled teachers to model and teach virtue, a school that would offer the riches of a classical education, that would present a historically-accurate understanding of the central role that the Catholic Church played in Western Civilization, and where their children would come to know and appreciate American exceptionalism.

They imagined a school that sought to form saints, and they developed a student Code of Conduct that would provide moral navigation to guide them to sanctity, and to grow in virtue and practice. And so they put the word out: was anyone interested in starting a new school?

The challenges seemed insurmountable, given the abundance of Catholic schools in the area, the costs for a start-up school, and the need to sell the idea of an alternative, untested, and unaccredited school to parents. But the sustaining force to persevere in our "imagined" school was driven by numerous hours before the Blessed Sacrament and submission to doing God's will before all else.

At one stage, we counted how many children were likely to enroll and compared the resulting tuition revenue with the estimated costs: There wouldn't be enough income to cover facilities rental and salary for a headmaster and three teachers. Some of us concluded that a school would be financially out of



PASADENA STAR-NEWS

Wednesday, October 3, 2001 ♦ www.pasadenastarnews.com

FAMILIES CREATE SCHOOL OF THEIR OWN



ALLISON SMITH, second- and third-grade teacher at St. Monica Academy in Pasadena, collects spelling papers from students. The fledgling private school has an enrollment of 44 students. (Staff Photo by WALT MANCINI)

Parent-run St. Monica Academy sets out to meet high standards set by organizers

By Mary Schubert
STAFF WRITER

PASADENA – A start-up with about four dozen "investors" opened for business last month in rented space at an Orange Grove Boulevard church. Its product, organizers hope, will be an academically strong education.

It's not a dot-com; rather, it's several local parents who have banded together to form a school that meets their standards.



reach. There were many times when the temptation to abandon the dream was strong, the task seeming too daunting, and the obstacles overwhelming. But each step of the planning was met with answered prayer and consolations to persevere.

Fortunately for all of us who now reap the benefits of St. Monica Academy, our first Board President Jeff Talbot did not give up the dream. In the Spring of 2001 he and Alex Lessard identified an "angel investor," who would put up \$55,000 for the headmaster's first year's salary: Mr. Roy Rohter, who later became our first Ostia Award honoree. Providential events like that showed us that the Holy Spirit was working to ensure this school's existence.

Through Stephen Grimm, our long-time choir director, the newly-renovated Neighborhood Church compound was identified as an affordable, bucolic campus that was freeway-close and centrally located in Pasadena - a true Godsend. Mr. David Burroughs agreed to become our first headmaster. Our inaugural teachers were Miss Allison Smith for 2/3 grades, Mr. Mario Landeros for 4/5 grades, (now) SMA parent Michael Grumbine for 6/7 grades, and Mrs. Alma Cornejo for Math. Our curriculum drew upon the knowledge and experience of parents who had successfully home schooled for years.

Our doors opened for the first day on September 5, 2001 with 44 students in grades 2-7 from 25 families. Word-of-mouth (and a glowing feature story in the Pasadena Star News: see inset) prompted new enrollments, reaching a total that first semester of 53 students and 31 families. At the very first morning assembly, in an effort to rally enthusiasm, Mr. Burroughs sent the students to their classrooms with the exclamation: "Go and be excellent today!" And every morning assembly in the ensuing 15 years has likewise ended with this exhortation, an encapsulation of our school's mission and our students' achievements. ■

A TIGHT-KNIT FRATERNITY

St. Monica Academy's Baseball Program

The St. Monica Academy Baseball program is on the rise. Only six years after first fielding a team, SMA Baseball has captured four consecutive league titles, has advanced past the first round of CIF playoffs twice, and is widely recognized in the division as a force to be reckoned with. How has such a small program achieved so much?

Two years ago, Coach Phil Gleason took over as coach of the team. A former highly-ranked prospect from nearby Arcadia High School, Gleason's promising career was cut short by injuries. Unwilling to leave the game, he began coaching in his early 20s. More than 20 years later, he has coached at every level of youth baseball, and is one of the most highly-regarded baseball coaches in Southern California.

There is no JV team at SMA. From day one, underclassmen play alongside older, more



Above: Coach Gleason and Assistant Coach Quackenbush with the team after their victory in the first round of playoffs. Left: League MVP Jack Golbranson ('17). Below left: Coach Gleason and outfielder Nick Nieva ('19). Below right: Captain and 2015 All CIF-SS Pitcher Matthew Golbranson ('16).

experienced players. Coach Gleason's ability to teach to all levels, combined with the friendship and example of the older players, has dramatic effects on the development of the rookies. Charlie Boles had never played organized baseball before, but by the end of his freshman year, he was the starting left fielder and most importantly, he had fallen in love with baseball.

Coach Gleason also helps older players elevate their games to the next level. Over the last two years, while effectively teaching young players the fundamentals of the game, Coach Gleason has developed rising-senior Jack Golbranson into a power-hitting, gold-glove-caliber catcher. Under Gleason's tutelage, Jack was League MVP, was named to the All CIF-SS Team, and attended a prestigious week-long showcase at Stanford University.

In addition to developing great ball players, Coach Gleason shapes the boys into exemplary individuals and teammates. Combining toughness and fun, he forms character but lets the boys be characters. He fosters a culture of respect and mutual support that brings the boys into a tight-knit fraternity. Whether struggling or succeeding, each player is encouraged and sustained by the team. The result is a group of boys, freshmen through seniors, who are forged into a loyal, enthusiastic, and successful team—an experience Coach Gleason insists is an education for life. Whether in the college classroom, in the dorm, in the workplace, or in the home, these boys will be responsible for fostering virtue and fellowship. They will have to put into practice the lessons of playing, working, and living as part of a team. ■



15TH ANNIVERSARY AUCTION SUCCESS

St. Monica Academy celebrated 15 years of excellence in elementary and high school education at the 15th Anniversary Auction Gala this spring. The event was held on the beautiful new Montrose campus and included classroom tours, cocktail hour and silent auction, dinner and live auction, and music and dancing.

After 14 years without a home of our own, the 15th Anniversary Auction was the perfect opportunity to showcase the new campus to the wider community. Through the vision and dedication of Auction Chair Calise Green and the extensive Auction Committee, the campus was transformed into a stunning gala venue.

Guests arrived at the front of the school building where at last "St. Monica Academy—Faith, Reason, Virtue" is written in stone. They proceeded through the building for a tour of the newly-renovated classrooms, science lab, computer lab, and library. The cocktail hour and silent auction were held in an elegantly-transformed Healy Hall, and guests donated,



Above: Joanne Goodwin and her husband Murphy Goodwin received SMA's 2016 Ostia Award. Left: Daniel and Eileen Collins bidding on a Live Auction item. Below left: Andrew Halpin and the Halpin Family Band provided live music for post-dinner dancing. Below right: Murphy and Joanne's children present at the Auction: Sam and Mary (Goodwin) Curphey, Frater Simeon (Charlie), Anna, Rosie, and Jack Goodwin.

dined, and danced the night away in a clear roof tent under the stars.

Due to the generosity of SMA's donors, friends, parents, and board, the event was SMA's highest-grossing Auction yet, bringing in more than \$175,000. And a bountiful auction is critical to our school's well-being. From its inception, St. Monica's has been committed to keeping tuition affordable, (tuition is half that of many local independent schools) but that means that the annual income from tuition is \$600,000 short of SMA's costs. Unlike most schools, SMA does not yet have an endowment or expansive alumni base to help offset annual needs. Every dollar must be raised from zero at the start of the school

year, so a successful auction is essential for continuing operation.

Auction proceeds also helped fund campus improvements this summer, including high-security fencing and coded-entry gates and a 3-ton air conditioner for the classroom building.

The high point of the evening was the presentation of SMA's Ostia Award to two dear members of the community. Murphy and Joanne Goodwin were instrumental in the founding and growth of the school. "They were not only talented leaders," said Headmaster Marguerite Grimm, "but also generous donors. The school will be forever indebted to these two founders." ■





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MISSION STATEMENT

St. Monica Academy, an independent, coeducational school for grades one through twelve, founded by parents in fulfillment of their primary responsibility for educating their children, seeks to form students in faith, reason, and virtue through a classical education in the Roman Catholic tradition.

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Archbishop of Los Angeles Jose Gomez fills the thurible before celebrating St. Monica Academy's Baccalaureate Mass.