



# Saint Maria Goretti

Est. 1954

## Catholic School

December 4, 2020

Dear SMGCS Families,

Today we met (virtually via Google Meets) for our December Faith Families assembly! Our focus this month is the virtue of **Purity**.

In our whole group virtual session, we learned the meaning of purity – keeping your soul free of sin; other words for purity, such as *chasteness, innocence, chastity, modesty, and immaculate*; and some thoughts on the virtue of purity from St. John Bosco, St. Augustine, and St. Josemaria Escriva. I also shared some of the symbols of purity that we find in our Catholic faith: the lily, the fleur de Lis, and the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit.

We then discussed three saints who especially emulate the virtue of purity: *St. Dominic Savio*, who told God that he would rather die than commit a sin. St. Dominic used his many talents to help lead all the rough boys at Don Bosco's school to Jesus. St. Dominic invited them to Confession, talked them out of fights, and changed the subject when they were being unkind. *St. Agnes* lived at a time when it was illegal to be a Christian. A wealthy young man fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. She told him that she had already given her heart to Jesus. The young man was upset and reported her to the government for being a Christian. Agnes was arrested, and everyone begged her to deny her faith and worship the Roman gods. She refused, and was sentenced to death. Saint Agnes went joyfully to martyrdom. Angus means "lamb", and a spotless lamb is the symbol of her pure love for Christ. And of course, the patron saint of our school, *St. Maria Goretti* is a wonderful model of the virtue of purity. Maria was very beautiful and a young man named Alessandro tried to approach her several times but Maria refused him. Alessandro attacked Maria, stabbing her. Maria survived the attack long enough to receive the Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion for the last time. Before she died, her parish priest asked her if she forgave Alessandro. She responded, "Yes, I do, for the love of Jesus, forgive him, and I want him to be with me in Paradise." She was only eleven years old. When Alessandro was released from prison, he went to Maria's mother and asked her to forgive him. She did and they attended Christmas Midnight Mass together.

We concluded our whole-group discussion with a discussion on the season of Advent, the meaning of the word – the Latin word for coming, and how we celebrate Advent. Fr. Jim then blessed our Advent wreath and the Christmas trees that are decorated in the cafetorium.

Students continued the lesson and discussion on purity in their homeroom Faith Family groups, where teachers reviewed the virtue of purity and also discussed St. Nicholas Day, which is celebrated each year on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Students listened to the story, *The Baker's Dozen: A Saint Nicholas Tale*, and then created their own St. Nicholas ornament which they will hang on the Christmas trees in the cafetorium. Students also put their shoes in the hallway hoping for a special treat from St. Nicholas, and were thrilled to find candy canes and oranges in their shoes at the conclusion of Faith Families! Faith Families concluded by praying the Faith Families prayer together.

It is our hope that the children continue to reflect on the virtue of purity and the many ways we can prepare our hearts for Christ, especially during this season of Advent.

Blessings,

Laura Behee, M.Ed.  
Principal