



Saint Maria Goretti

Est. 1954

Catholic School

March 1, 2021

Dear SMGCS Families,

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

In our whole group virtual session, we learned the meaning of respect – recognizing the dignity of all people. We also discussed other words for respect including, *appreciation, thoughtfulness, admiration, cherish, politeness, and courtesy*; and some thoughts on the virtue of respect from St. Basil and others. I also shared ways that we can practice or show respect to others every day, including listening when someone else is speaking; looking others in the eye; not gossiping or ridiculing others; and by being obedient to our parents, grandparents, teachers, etc. Students heard a short story about how words can ruin a person's reputation and the importance of choosing our words wisely.

We then discussed three saints who were exemplary models of the virtue of respect: *St. Jeanne Jugan*, whose acts of respect and charity grew into the work of the Little Sisters of the Poor, the order that today still cares for poor elderly people all around the world.

St. Damien of Molokai was born Jozef de Veuster and entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, taking the religious name of Damien. He was sent as a missionary to Hawaii, where he spent 10 years befriending the people, enjoying their food, learning their language, traveling and building churches. At that time, the Hawaiian government exiled anyone with leprosy to an isolated peninsula on the island of Molokai. St. Damien volunteered to go there and serve the people, building houses, an orphanage and a church, and giving dignity and respect to the people that everyone else left for dead. St. Damien is also responsible for hundreds of conversions and baptisms. After 16 years, St. Damien himself contracted the disease and died at the age of 49.

St. Pope John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyla in Poland in 1920. A brilliant student, actor, and devout Catholic, Karol eventually had to study, act, and pray in secret because he lived during the Nazi occupation of Poland. His archbishop secretly trained Karol and a few other young men for the priesthood, and Karol was ordained in 1946. He was ordained a bishop at the age of 38, the youngest in his country. He later became the archbishop of Krakow, then a cardinal, and in 1978 was elected pope, taking the name Pope John Paul II. St. Pope John Paul II's deep appreciation and zeal for the dignity of all people changed the world. He beatified over 1000 people and canonized over 400 saints! Pope John Paul II died on April 5, 2005.

We concluded our Faith Families (Virtual) Assembly with a special presentation from our 2nd Grade students, chanting the *Sanctus*. The *Sanctus*, meaning Holy, has been a part of the Mass from the first century AD. The chant unites our voices with those of the saints and angels in heaven into one song of praise of God. See the 2nd grader's presentation here: <https://youtu.be/QNz6YSRjojQ>.

Students continued the lesson and discussion in their homeroom Faith Family groups, where teachers reviewed the virtue of respect, introduced information about the important work of Catholic Charities, and

presented the Faith Families activity centered on the Corporal Works of Mercy and the Stations of the Cross. Faith Families concluded by praying the Faith Families prayer together.

It is our hope that the children continue to reflect on the blessing of our Catholic school community, as well as the virtue of respect and the many ways practicing this virtue helps us show dignity to all people.

Blessings,

Laura Behee, M.Ed.
Principal