

St. Mary School News

St. Mary School nurtures the development of the whole child: spiritually, academically, emotionally, and socially. St. Mary School provides a strong, accessible, and rigorous Catholic education to the students of greater Grays Harbor and their families.



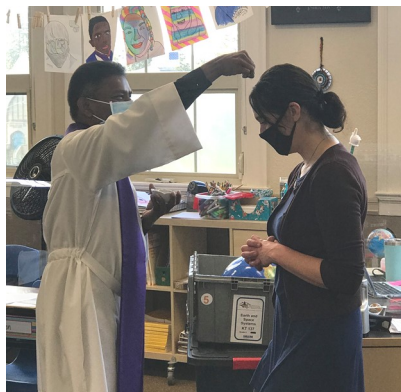
A Publication for Alumni, Families, and Friends of St. Mary School

Father Francis Embraces New Opportunity

Possibilities arise for sister school relationship between St. Mary School and Good News School

“We come to go.” That is the personal motto that Father Francis Arulappan said he shares with new priests in his missionary order, Heralds of Good News. And that sense of always anticipating the next opportunity is perhaps what kept Father Francis calm, as he talked about his transition from overseeing seven parishes and a school on the coast of Washington to starting a brand-new school in his native India.

Father Francis departed Grays Harbor at the end of May after serving five years, first as a parochial vicar, and then as priest administrator of the Catholic Parishes of Western Grays Harbor and Forks, which included responsibility for St. Mary School. He was recently elected assistant superior general of the Heralds of Good News order and given responsibility for overseeing the new school. During his time in Grays Harbor, SMS faculty, staff, and students got to know and love Father



Francis and his joyful demeanor. “Father Francis empowered Catholic teachers by his positive

Father Francis sprinkles ashes on the head of fifth-grade teacher Denise Roberts on Ash Wednesday.

encouragement and grace,” said fifth-grade teacher Denise Roberts. “He led by example at every moment, and greeted everyone with a smile. His impact on my faith formation instruction will be everlasting.”

His positive outlook on things will serve Father Francis well, as he launches a new school in a rural area with very few Catholic families, and in the midst of a pandemic that has hit India very hard. Originally scheduled to open in June, the “Good News English Medium High School” (or Good News School for short), will now begin classes in July or August, depending on how the situation with the coronavirus progresses.

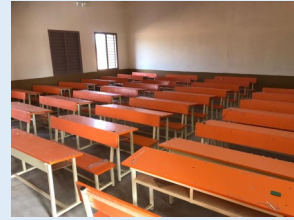
“We pray that things are pretty clear by that time and we will be able to function,” said Father Francis.

The extra time will give him a chance to work on things like hiring additional teachers (he currently has three nuns on staff) and finding vans or busses to transport students from neighboring villages to the school. His own commute however, won’t be an issue, as his residence will be right on the school campus. “In the same building, one side is my bedroom and the other side



Father Francis Arulappan left Grays Harbor in May to oversee a new school in his native India

(Counterclockwise from below): Father Francis with First Eucharist recipients; joining students during the Fun Run; the exterior of the Good News School; the school chapel; a sample classroom.



Father Francis, continued from page 1

is my office,” he laughed.

The Good News School will start with grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade and add grades each year, with a long-term plan of serving 1200 students. Run by the Heralds of Good News order, the school will differentiate itself from public schools in the area not only by being a Catholic school, but also by making sure students learn to read, write and speak English. Father Francis would also like to create a connection between the Good News School and St. Mary School to help students and teachers on both sides get to know each other and learn from one another. He and Principal Carrie Marlow have discussed the idea of a “sister school” relationship that could benefit everyone. “I want to introduce the students to each other and create new friendships. Also for the children at St. Mary’s, they might get to know the language, culture, and events in other parts of the world.” He noted that people in the U.S. sometimes take for granted things like electricity, running water, and having their own bedroom that are not common in rural India.

“It is bittersweet,” said Carrie Marlow. “We are so sad to see Father Francis go, but we are also excited at the prospect of developing new relationships with the staff and students at the Good News School. For our students to have the opportunity to grow in their global awareness AND to share their faith knowledge with students across the world is truly a blessing.”

Father Francis also hopes to borrow some of the structural pieces in place at SMS and introduce them at the Good News School. He took with him copies of the student and parent handbooks along with ideas such as the school commission and Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). He also said that fundraising events are not a common thing at schools in India and he would like to try using some of the activities in place at St. Mary School to

see if they might work there. In the long term, he would also like to put together an endowment fund like that at SMS that can generate income each year for the school.

Asked what he will remember about his time around SMS, Father Francis first mentioned the students and teachers. “When we would come to the school and look at (students’) smiling faces, our worries and fatigue would just go away. Also, the teachers here are so committed, they go the extra mile to help the students and they are willing to share their faith.” He also expressed his thankfulness for the many school supporters: alumni, parishioners, and community members. “Often when I would meet someone in the community, the first thing they would tell me is ‘I studied at St. Mary’s’ – they are proud of it.”

As for the immediate needs of the Good News School, Father Francis listed things like computers, vans for transporting students, and a water purification system. Additionally, the staff at St. Mary School have taken up a collection to start a scholarship that will help students afford the tuition at the Good News School.

Despite the hard work ahead of him, Father Francis maintains his optimistic viewpoint. “I am happy to work anywhere, but at a school, though there are a lot of challenges, it keeps you cheerful and energized, and it’s a chance to live your faith.”

He ended with a reminder for school supporters that seems applicable no matter what country they live in: “The students are the future of the Church and of our country, so you are educating people so that you can see a good future for your community and the nation.”

Those wishing to support the Good News School can do so through the U.S. arm of the Heralds of Good News. For information on making donations, please contact St. Mary School: 360-532-1230 (after August 1st) or advancement@saintmaryschool.org.

Jennalee Cook: “A Legacy of Self-less Devotion”



St. Mary School bid farewell to its longest serving faculty member when technology teacher Jennalee Cook retired this June after 26 years on the SMS staff. In addition to teaching technology to students of all grade levels, Mrs. Cook also coordinated a myriad of other programs, including the school yearbook, robotics club, “SMS

News,” and maintained the school computer hardware, software, and networking. She also served as unofficial school photographer/historian, documenting dozens of events each school year.

“It is impossible to sum up Jennalee and her lengthy tenure at St. Mary School,” said Principal Carrie Marlow. “She is leaving behind her a beautiful legacy of self-less devotion and genuine love for students and the teaching of technology. In 26 years, Jennalee has touched the lives of countless St. Mary students and staff members and while we wish her many retirement blessings, St. Mary School will not be the same without her!”

Mrs. Cook came to St. Mary School in 1996 and began teaching students using Macintosh SE computers featuring nine-inch black and white screens that were state-of-the-art at the time. The internet was just becoming available for widespread use and Mrs. Cook remembers “we had to use direct cables to each computer and it was very slow.”

Over time, computers got faster, more sophisticated and more connected and Mrs. Cook with her calm, optimistic manner did

whatever was needed to keep up with the changes.

“I had some background in computers from my previous work in banking, plus (former SMS parent and tech enthusiast) Gail Quigg was always willing to help me,” Mrs. Cook said. She also credited classes available through the Educational Service District (ESD) for helping her stay up-to-date.

Despite the technical focus of her position, what Mrs. Cook enjoyed most about her time was the interaction with students and watching their progress.

“It’s a cool thing to see the way the kids pick everything up so easily,” she said. She listed the student-produced SMS News as an example of this, with students learning to perform every aspect of putting together a weekly news broadcast for the rest of the school.

As one of the few teachers to instruct students of all grade levels, Mrs. Cook got to know and connect with students from their early years all the way through 8th grade graduation. She also joked about the benefit of having a classroom in the school basement near the student bathrooms. “The kids are always so friendly and wave and greet you as they walk by the door.”

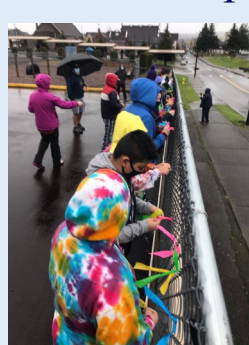
Asked about her plans for the future, Mrs. Cook said she intends to wait and get a feel for retirement before making any big plans for travel or other major changes. “I’m just going to enjoy one day at a time.”

With that same positive outlook, she shared a few parting words of wisdom that those who know Mrs. Cook would say she lives out herself: “Enjoy the moment, always smile, and try to be kind to each other.”



Jennalee Cook at Marine Biology Camp in 2014. “I loved the school camps,” she said.

School Snapshots



Students tie their prayer intentions to the fence during Catholic Schools Week.



The eighth-grade graduating class of 2021



Second-grade student Brooklyn Stott enjoying her reign as principal for a day.

Virtual SPIRIT Auction Blessed With Success

If ever there was a year that organizers of the St. Mary School SPIRIT Auction needed guidance from the actual Holy Spirit, it was 2021. The biennial SPIRIT Auction is by far the school's largest fundraiser, normally providing around \$150,000 in scholarships and operation funding that is used over a two-year period. But the challenges of putting on an auction in the middle of a global pandemic meant that almost nothing would be "normal."

"We couldn't get our school families as involved with the planning and execution, and we couldn't expect many of our local businesses to donate at their normal level, if they were able to donate at all," said auction co-chair Pete Scroggs. "Most challenging was the fact that we couldn't all gather together in one place to laugh and share the sense of community that is such a big part of the SPIRIT Auction."

As they pondered each piece of the auction puzzle, organizers found that at every turn, just the right person or process turned up to provide what was needed. The first example of this came as the auction committee wondered how to find someone with the technical ability to take the experience of an in-person event and move it online. Enter Rick Moyer and his wife Amy, whose company, Moyer Multimedia had just produced the online Christmas service at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church where auction co-chair Maria Boling's family are members. Not only was Rick local and a strong Christian, he also was willing to take on the challenge of producing something that no one on the committee had any experience with.

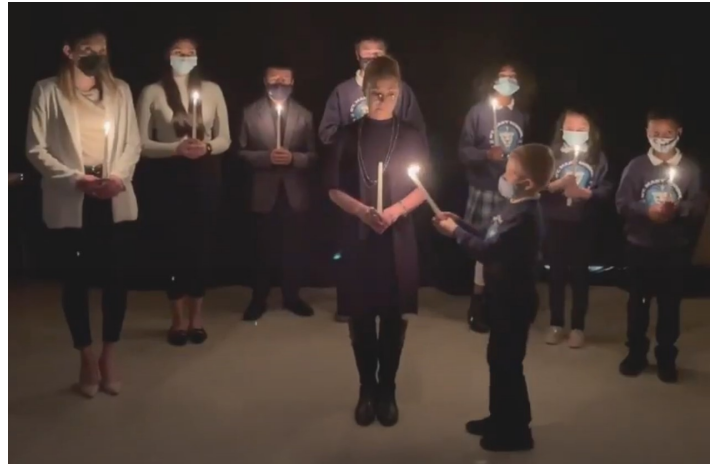
"Watching Rick take our vision, expand on it and bring it to life was an amazing transformation," said Maria Boling. "It was so exciting to have our ideas become real and see it in action!"

Rick worked his magic to produce three videos in advance of the auction that would be shown to the live audience on the night of the event. Trickiest of these was the video in support of the Mary Drake Scholarship Fund which involved filming eight current and former SMS



students along with Principal Carrie Marlow in a pitch-black classroom

Auction hosts David Quigg, Jamie Quigg, and Gary Morean during the live broadcast.



Current and former St. Mary School students with Principal Carrie Marlow during the Mary Drake Scholarship information video.

over a two-hour period and then editing it into a seamless five-minute video.

Next up came the challenge of finding people willing and qualified to step in as auctioneer and emcee for the live auction broadcast. The group had to look no further for emcees than SMS parents and natural extroverts David and Jamie Quigg. Their ability to blend humorous quips with a genuine passion for all things related to St. Mary School made them a natural choice. For auctioneer, local attorney, actor, and auctioneering veteran Gary Morean was willing to donate his time and experience to the cause. The fact that the trio had acting experience and were comfortable in a live broadcast situation gave the auction committee comfort knowing this portion of the event was in good hands.

With the production end of the auction coming together, the next major issue was where to look for items to auction off. In normal times, the school relies on donations from hotels, restaurants, and retail businesses to fill the auction catalog, but these were often the same businesses that had been impacted the most by COVID shutdowns. While pondering how to fill this void, the committee responded to an invitation from SMS alum and local woodworker Tom Jackson to visit his shop and "pick up some items." When they arrived, Tom told them that he had spent much of the COVID lockdown in his shop making items for the numerous charities that he supports, only to have most of those groups cancel their events. In order to clear out some of the abundance of items, Tom gave the school dozens of cutting boards, garden pieces, and furniture that filled three large vehicles to the brim.

"We are so appreciative of Tom's generosity and support of SMS," said Principal Carrie Marlow. "Each time auction season rolls around he is more than willing to

Continued on page 5



Left to Right: One of the live auction items included two child's Adirondack chairs made by Tom Jackson; supporters picked up charcuterie boxes and beverage kits to enjoy while bidding; Anne Marie Babineau gave a cocktail class during the live broadcast

SPiRiT Auction continued from page 4

donate beautifully made items and this year's abundance of items was a real blessing!"

Another providential move was the decision to add a small raffle to the auction as an option for school families who might not be able to donate items themselves. The raffle quickly mushroomed into a big success and provided extra cash that the school was able to use to enhance auction items by adding nights to hotel stays or purchasing restaurant gift cards to bolster a trip.

Now there was only one piece of the puzzle missing: people to participate in the auction and bid on the items. One upside of holding the auction online was that the limits of how many people can fit in a room did not apply. On the other hand, most school supporters had never attended an online auction and might need some encouragement to give it a try. And the over-65 age group that traditionally makes up a good portion of the auction audience was the same group that might feel challenged by the technical know-how

required to participate in a virtual event. To combat this, the committee encouraged families and friends to gather in their "quarantine bubble" groups where people could help each other watch and bid. Another opportunity was for school families who are normally

volunteering behind the scenes to take part in the online event. Finally, the group tried to reach beyond the normal auction invitation list, promoting the event through the school and alumni Facebook pages, as well as through social media in the community. The result was about 30% more people participating than at a typical in-person auction.

With all of the pieces in place, the auction week festivities built up to the main event. Attendees were able to pre-order food and beverages from local sponsors and pick them up before the auction. Silent auction items opened for bidding on the Monday before the live

presentation, giving bidders a chance to practice navigating the website and placing bids. They could also bid on "Dessert Dash" items including cakes, pies, and tarts, that would be delivered to the winning bidders during the live auction. Finally, on Saturday night, cameras rolled in the "production studio" (aka SMS auditorium), and auctioneers, volunteers, and bidders all did their part as if it was nothing out of the ordinary.

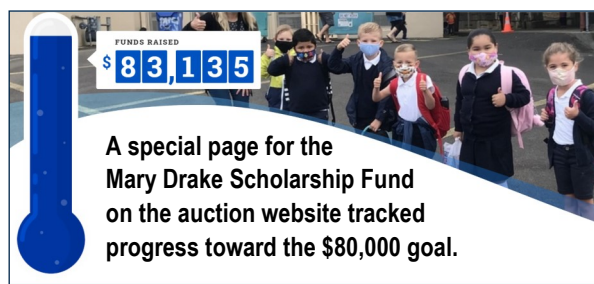
"With the challenges of a virtual online platform, my goal was to engage our community, and bring families, alumni, and all school supporters together," said Maria Boling. "After the event while visiting with a parishioner, she shared that after this last year of uncertain times and world changing events, watching and participating in the auction with fellow alumni and other school supporters made things feel 'right and normal for the first time in over a year'! I could not have asked for a nicer compliment to sum up our event. My heart was full for St. Mary School and our faith filled community."

When the dust settled, the event was a success by almost every measure. The Mary Drake Scholarship Fund met its goal of \$80,000. The live and silent auctions and other items brought in another \$60,000. Additionally, many of the expenses that go along with an in-person auction were not necessary,

including things like a catered meal, open bar, and out-of-town auction company.

"Thanks to the efforts of our donors, bidders, and workers, the SPiRiT Auction far exceeded our expectations," said Pete Scroggs. "And we have heard from many people that they enjoyed the online auction so we may try to create some type of hybrid event the next time around."

With two years to prepare for the next SPiRiT Auction, organizers will look forward to a return to a more normal event while giving thanks for the blessings and guidance for this year's auction.





A Message From Mrs. Marlow

Greetings St. Mary School Community and Supporters!

“I will walk by faith even when I cannot see.” 2 Corinthians 5:7

In spite of the many mountains and curve balls we have faced this school year, we have “walked by faith” and moved forward together. Prior to March 2020 we could not have imagined the way our world would change, the way teaching and learning would change, nor the ways in which our faith would be challenged. For many months we struggled to see a path forward, but we kept the faith and forged on, together.

Mere words are not enough to describe how proud I am of the perseverance of our school staff, our students, and our parents. In addition, the outpouring of support from our St. Mary School community, alumni, parishioners, and supporters has been such a blessing. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities we have had this year to strengthen our faith in not only God, but each other.

We have safely and successfully kept the doors to St. Mary School open and the students learning. We have learned new ways to celebrate traditional events and reach out to each other. We have navigated and implemented safety and health protocols, new technology, and strengthened our bonds despite the distance between us. We have been blessed!

As we close the books on this school year and make plans to open the next, I say thank you to all of you who “walked by faith” with us. Whether you prayed for us, sent in a donation, helped your student with their school work, participated in fundraisers, or bravely worked in the school building each day, your efforts did not go unnoticed and I am grateful for you.

May you have a wonderful summer and may the Lord bless you abundantly!

Together in Christ,

Carrie Marlow
School Principal

Donations and memorial gifts, November 7, 2020 to June 22, 2021

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In Memory of Pete Anderson

Mick (Fred III) and Linda Hulbert

In Memory Of Kris Barnes

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