

## Welcome: Third-Grade Teacher, Rachel McKnight

### *A Faithful, Joyful Place of Belonging*

By Rachel McKnight

We search for a place to belong; a place filled with a community of believers, a place with neighbors who help those in need, a place where we can talk about and live out our love for the Savior. I thank God every day for allowing our hearts to be open to the Spirit that has led us to this school where we have found our pearl of great price. After being away from the classroom for 18 years and staying home and raising our seven children, I feel blessed and honored to be a part of Father Marquette Catholic Academy as your third-grade teacher.

Sometimes people ask how I raise our children and work full time or how I remain joyful. I can tell you that it has NOTHING to do with me and EVERYTHING to do with

God! Philippians 4:13 says “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Everyone is busy, everyone has “stuff” going on that is so much more of a burden than I carry. I see God’s strength in those people as I walk the halls and count myself as blessed to be here.

If you look on the walls outside each room, you will see an icon of a Holy Saint; those who have come before us and are now the Church Triumphant and the holy souls of heaven are here in this school with all of us. Outside the third-grade door is one of them, St. Therese of Lisieux. She said, “The world’s thy ship and not thy home.” Let us pray for each other this year as we journey together in this life to our true eternal home.

*I thank God everyday for allowing our hearts to be open to the Spirit that has led us to this school where we have found our pearl of great price.*



Third-grade students practicing their cursive handwriting.



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## Father Marquette Catholic Academy

Newsletter | Fall 2022



Through the Holy Spirit we find

### *Strength and Growth*

By Dr. Jessica Nicole Betz

***So neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*** 1 Corinthians 3:7

We begin the 2022/2023 school year with hearts full of strength and love. Father Marquette Catholic Academy has been blessed with so many new and returning families, and we know that through the Holy Spirit, we will continue to grow and blossom. With 160 students in the building this year, we can see the fruits of our Mission as a Catholic School. Our Mission Statement drives everything that we do and grounds us in the Faith and the Holy Spirit. Each year, we continue to find the strength we need to foster a resilient Catholic School for our community.

Our strong, Catholic school also experiences regular growth in the areas of staff, curriculum, and programs. Father Marquette Catholic Academy continues to provide a beautiful Catholic, Classical, Liberal Arts Curriculum, and we have a strong team of teachers and staff who work hard to ingeniously teach this curriculum each day. Our students can focus on in-depth learning, as their teachers lead them to explore and wonder. Afterall, we are working to form disciples of Christ who will go forth to improve the world around them.

Thank you for being an integral part of the FMCA Family. As a part of this family, you are a part of the growth and success! You strengthen us, because you provide us with vital support and for that we are grateful. We pray that like us, you find strength and growth through the power of the Holy Spirit this year and always.



Dr. Jessica Betz

*Each year, we continue to find the strength we need to foster a resilient Catholic School for our community.*





**Our Mission**  
Centered in the person of Jesus Christ and grounded in the teachings of the Catholic Church, Father Marquette Catholic Academy is a mission of four Marquette parishes. Partnering with parents, we work to form students into disciples who will go forth to improve the world around them. We accomplish this by uniting the pursuits of faith and reason. Through rigorous academics grounded in the perennial classical curriculum and a commitment to personal attention of each student and their growth in virtue, we are dedicated to the complete formation of our students, remembering that in the end, only one thing is necessary.

# Father Marquette Catholic Academy students plant and water, but God grows.

As part of Laudato Si, (Encyclical of Pope Francis) students are learning to take care of our common home in STEM science class, which is definitely hands on and in the soil. If you walk around the back of the middle school, you will see the seven raised bed garden projects in cooperation with the MSU Extension 4-H and nutrition program. In early spring, students start plants from seed in their classroom. They watch the miracle of life unfold from those tiny seeds. Just before the last day of school, they scramble to get the plants in the soil between the very tricky spring weather patterns of warmth and frost—not an easy task.

All summer families volunteer to water and weed. When they volunteer, they also get to eat the peas, beans, squash, dill, basil, parsley, and other tasty rewards. Sometimes there is even a bunny nest or two that must be moved to the lilacs. Marigold don't always

repel a determined rabbit. They also learn about Japanese beetles and the natural insect repellent of geraniums tucked among the vegetables.

When students return to school, they are amazed that the spindly tomato plants are now huge and loaded with red and yellow tomatoes, perfect for a recess snack. Zucchini's are a foot long and ready for banana - chocolate bread. Early in the school year, students will dig up potatoes and prepare a feast of parsley buttered red-skinned potatoes. If you explore more, you will find yellow raspberries.

On the building's west side, hundreds of flowers and shrubs in the Five Glorious Mysteries Garden and special drought-tolerant Girl Scout Garden were chosen and planted by the students to pop up under the snow in spring. Each one has a virtuous Medieval meaning like hydrangea--



Seventh-grade students enjoy the beauty and growth of the garden.



Two sixth-grade students pick corn from the garden.

**They watch the miracle of life unfold from those tiny seeds.**

gratitude, Black Eyed Susan – encouragement, hope, motivation, innocence, and purity.

Now as you read this, students have been assigned 18 inches of the flower beds and are learning the difference between a flower and a weed with technology applications. Given 15 minutes, they will pull out the weeds and apply a special mulch. Before the snow falls, they will gather seeds and pile maple leaves around plants to protect the roots all winter until the cycle begins again. They will have earned a rest on the Guy Consolmagno/Petry benches and the Curran gazebo.

**Interesting fact.** Brother Guy Consolmagno is the Vatican Director of Astronomy and first cleric to receive the Cal Sagan Award. He has Marquette family and helped donate the prayer benches in the FMCA gardens in honor of his deceased family. “... science needs religion in order to have a conscience, to know that, just because something is possible, it may not be a good thing to do.” G. Consolmagno)

## Alumni Highlight: The Millado Family

Meet the Millado Family, an Alumni Family of Father Marquette Catholic Academy. All 6 of their children attended and graduated from FMCA.

**What was your experience with FMCA?**  
All my children have built lifelong friendships at FMCA. Academically they were well prepared for the rigors of high school and AP classes.

**Why did you choose FMCA?**  
Both my husband and I went to Catholic schools and wanted our children to have the opportunity to attend one as well.

**How do you feel FMCA set your children up for success later in life?**  
Faith and values will dictate most of one's actions and decisions. I feel FMCA help build a foundation in my children's lives early on. I'm happy to share that one of our sons graduated from Notre Dame and immediately volunteered a year of service with the Jesuit volunteer Corp in Sitka, Alaska. Here he helped with senior citizen activities as well as with SAIL.

**Why FMCA schools versus other private schools?**  
“Planting the seed,” building and teaching the children about faith and values early on is important to my husband and me.

**Do you have a favorite memory of your time here?**  
Strangely enough, our best memories are during athletic competitions. We barely had enough kids to make a team which meant everyone played! The goal each practice was to work out, improve and have fun. During games, everyone did their best, conquered their fear of losing and best of all, even surprised themselves on how much they have improved! Years later, we see these same kids thrive in high school athletics.

**What would you tell a potential family considering FMCA?**  
Definitely look into it. Talk to the principal and teachers. Take a tour. Try it out.



The Millado family, FMCA Alumni

**Where and what are your children doing now?**

**Kristen** is in Miami, expecting her first child and a practicing oncologist. **Nick** is in Chicago, working as a model and entrepreneur. **Michael** is in Austin. He is a Material Science engineer. **Matthew** graduated from Notre Dame with an Environmental Science Degree with a Sustainability minor and just finished a year of service with the Jesuit volunteer corp. **Raffy** is attending Michigan University, finishing up his Computer Science Degree. **Maria** is also at Michigan University as a freshman this year, undecided.



## Congratulations to Jennie Thill Pre-K Gold Teacher and Director of Early Childhood

In the Spring of 2022, Jennie Thill received the Early Educators of Excellence Award. We are extremely blessed to have Jennie teaching and guiding our early childhood program at FMCA.

**Below is a short excerpt from her nomination:**  
Jennie is passionate about the experiences she is providing for the children and families in her care. She is dedicated to continuous learning and both personal growth and the growth of her program. She not only cares about children

and families, but gives great care to her staff experiences, ensuring they have the knowledge and materials necessary to provide quality care. Jennie took on the High Scope curriculum in a private Catholic preschool. She has done a wonderful job incorporating both and gaining support of administration and families at the school. Jennie ensures she facilitates positive relationships with families. She ensures she approaches her relationships with families as a partnership, to meet the needs of each child.