

St. Rita of Cascia Summer Letter 2019

Dear St. Rita School Family,



I hope that this letter finds you in good health and enjoying the days of summer. It seems when the celebration of the 4th of July passes, the stores start stacking the shelves with school supplies. It is good to prepare but it is also good to rest. We have had some sunny days and rainy days thus far. May we have blue skies ahead to enjoy some time outdoors.

Summer continues to be a busy time at school. The rooms are cleaned, and the floors are scrubbed and polished. We have had several special building projects this summer. Thanks to the funds raised at the Gala of the Rose, we have upgraded the gym with the installation of six large overhead fans (with safety cages in the event of a high-flying volleyball). We will be adding new carpeting to the lobby section at the gym entrance.

Another major undertaking was the purchase of new desks for K-5 and new chairs for 3,4 & 5. Our furniture has served us well. The replacements will make the classrooms bright and new as we welcome students back. Mrs. Droeske and Mrs. Harner coordinated the delivery and set up as well as the removal of the old desks. We had several of our high school alumni volunteer to help. I am very grateful to Mrs. Droeske and Mrs. Harner for taking on this task in addition to their regular summer duties.

Mrs. Rockwood has dedicated this past year to carrying out Phase 1 of the Dunham Fund grant program in technology. The teachers have been pleased with their surface pro units. We also were able to get a classroom set to begin our transition for our Jr. High students. This summer we are launching Phase 2. We have purchased 70 additional surface pro devices for the computer lab and to expand our Jr. High program. We have upgraded our internet access to handle all these new units. I am very grateful to Mrs. Rockwood for all the hours this summer to advance this program. One unexpected project was to replace the air conditioner for the computer lab. This will help preserve our equipment.

In our curriculum area, we have ordered a new science program for grades 6, 7 & 8. This year we will extend Confirmation preparation to our 7th grade students. In the fall of 2020 our current 7th and 8th grade students will receive the sacrament. St. Rita of Cascia parish is on a fall schedule each year. By preparing the 7th grade students they will graduate having been confirmed.

Each year, we have a spiritual theme for our school. This year our theme will be:

"We are God's Masterpiece"

Of all the wonderful things that God has created, each of us is His favorite creation. This phrase comes from Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece, He has created us anew in Christ, Jesus so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." In sacred scripture, we read that we are created in the image of God. I have always been a bit overwhelmed by that thought. I find that as a human being, I cannot measure up to coming close to that image. God created us as human. He understands our human failings and yet he still loves us. God gave us 'free will' which means we can choose how to live our lives. A generous and patient God waits for us to respond by choosing good.

God didn't leave us alone to that end. He gave us tools to make good choices. It is a blueprint to follow so that we can build up our lives and His kingdom. On Mount Sinai, he gave Moses the ten commandments. Jesus gave us the Beatitudes and taught us how to pray. Jesus gave His life and left us with sacraments to give us grace.

During my tours with new families, I will ask why the parent wants their child to come to St. Rita School. At the top of the list is a good education and being in a Christian environment. Parents want to have their children stay innocent and away from harmful influences. It is a difficult task when the influences of the world come to our families and our school.

More and more, we are challenged to help our children stay innocent. Our children are being exposed to more and more influences that are well beyond their emotional development. At baptism, we promise that we will protect our children from harm and help them lead a holy life. This is not always easy but it is so important to do.

When we think of a masterpiece, we think of a famous work of art or a renowned piece of music. Over time, those works of art are sold for a high price. They take on great value in the eyes of the world.

Since we are God's masterpiece, we are more valuable than any famous painting. We must preserve our value by working to make good and holy choices. By using the tools God gave to us (Commandments, Beatitudes, prayer, participating in mass each week, receiving the sacraments and doing good works) we will be able to grow in our holiness and help our children grow in holiness.

May the God who created us, help us to live good and holy lives throughout this summer and the year ahead. On a personal note, I want to express my gratitude for all the prayers and good thoughts for me as I recover from my knee surgery. God bless you.

Mrs. Bette Faxon