

Saint Denis - Saint Columba School

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*A Holy Ground of
Loving and Learning*

August 14, 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We extend a very warm welcome to all of our new families and wish them God's many graces and blessings as they begin their journey here with us! To our returning families, we remain grateful that you continue to entrust us with the faith and education of your children. Together on this holy ground we form a vibrant community of loving and learning.

How good it is to be a part of St. Denis-St. Columba School! On this ***Holy Ground of Loving and Learning*** God continues to reveal Himself to us and to invite us to ***open our hearts to Him and to receive all that He desires to give us***. I remember when Sr. Marie and I first arrived at St. Columba over thirteen years ago. We both knew that we were standing on Holy Ground. It was not because we thought this was a perfect place without challenges and difficulties, but because it was a place filled with so many people who believed that Jesus is alive and present in our midst! As I reflect upon the upcoming school year, especially during this time of the Eucharistic Revival, I am convinced that it is our mission to not only revitalize our own Faith in the Eucharistic Jesus, but also to provide our children with such experiences that will spark their belief in the TRUTH that Jesus is truly present here and now as he promised.

During the Last Supper Jesus said to his Apostles, *"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends"* (Jn 15:13). Then he makes that statement real in the gift of the Eucharist when he says, *"This is my Body given up for you... this is my Blood poured out for you"* (Lk 22:19-20). Jesus gives us this gift of Himself in the Eucharist, and it is on this holy ground where we truly encounter him. Do we fully embrace this truth and believe that the Eucharist is a person who is alive and transforms lives?

After his Resurrection, Jesus approached two despairing disciples on the road to Emmaus, and he interpreted for them the Scriptures. Then he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. It was then that they recognized him and knew they were on holy ground! (Lk 24:30). For us, too, the Eucharist makes us capable of seeing (*beyond the suffering and disappointments of life*) and believing in our Resurrected Lord.

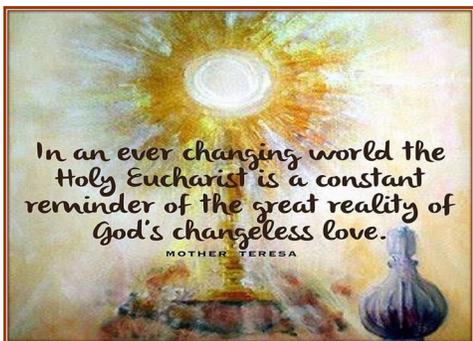
Near the shores of Galilee, Jesus' words to his first disciples were *"Come and See."* In that moment of Encounter, they found themselves on holy ground. Something changed in their hearts. Something finally made sense in meeting Jesus. Do you remember the first time you met Jesus in the Eucharist? What happened to your heart, the direction of your life, the desires you had? Encounters with Jesus change us.

Jesus commanded his disciples who had been with him during his public ministry: *"Do not be afraid, go and tell my brothers, and make disciples of all nations!"* (Mt 28:10, 19). Jesus is not a somebody from the past; he is a person living today. Pope Francis reminds us that we do not know him from history books; we encounter him each day on this holy ground of our lives. As Christians, we are invited to encounter his presence in the Eucharist and called to bring His ever-present Life into the world in which we live. How can we help our children truly encounter Jesus and grow in their relationship with Him?

During these final months of the Eucharistic Revival, we at St. Denis-St. Columba School will continue to develop within our students a deeper understanding of the REAL presence of Jesus living in and among us, especially in the Holy Eucharist. It is my hope that by providing them with meaningful Eucharistic experiences they will begin to see Jesus in the Eucharist as a Person, not as a thing or a piece of bread. For it is Jesus who

gives Himself entirely to us – *Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity* - each time we celebrate Mass, receive Holy Communion, or pray in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. It is Jesus who knows our deepest desires and wants us to open ourselves to Him, to trust Him, and to lay our needs at the Altar of His Mercy.

Please join me in welcoming to our school community *Megan Thuell*, who will be teaching sixth grade Religion-Science-ELA and Math 7-8 and *Maria Barton*, who will be teaching part-time Science 7-8. *Kelly Fulton* will now be full-time, teaching seventh grade Religion-ELA and Math 6, 7, 9. Each of these women, along with our present faculty and staff, bring their own gifts and experiences, a desire to share our Catholic faith, and a commitment to grow and nurture our students in a manner that will enable them to become who God wants them to be! We wish them God’s many graces and blessings in their ministry here with us!



Let us pray for one another as we begin this new school year!
God bless you and your families!

Looking forward to seeing you on Thursday, September 7th!

Sincerely in Jesus Risen,
Sr. Kathleen Marie, CR
Principal

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PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **New Student Orientation is Wednesday, August 30th 9:30-11:00**
- **Uniform Sale is Wednesday, August 30th from 9:00-1:00**
- **First Day of School is Thursday, September 7th.**
It is a FULL DAY, and the students are to bring their own lunches.
- **Hot Lunch and Milk programs begin on Monday, September 11th.**
More details will follow.
- **After School Program begins on Monday, September 11th.**
More details will follow.
- **Welcome Back to School Parent Night is Thursday, September 7th at 6:30 p.m.**
Information Sessions with Teachers will follow a brief general meeting in the school gym. A separate eighth grade meeting will be scheduled sometime later in September to discuss eighth grade expectations, fundraising activities, Confirmation, yearbook, etc.
- **PSA Back to School Barbecue is Friday, September 8th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**
Our PSA is once again hosting our Back-to-School Barbecue on the school grounds. All our school families, alumni of SDSC, and faculty and staff are invited. I hope you can join us as we gather together in fellowship and love to celebrate not only the beginning of a new school year, but also the gift of our SDSC community.