

**ST. MARY
MENOMONEE FALLS**

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**St. Mary Parish School
Menomonee Falls**



St. Mary Welcomes Father Michael Merkt

Fr. Michael was raised in New Berlin, WI. After grade school, Fr. Michael attended St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary, WI. Graduating in 1972, he attended UW-Milwaukee

while living in a Capuchin Formation House. In 1974, he entered the Capuchin Novitiate in Huntington, IN. Following Novitiate, he finished college at the University of Detroit (a small Jesuit college). The Capuchins studied theology at St. Francis in Milwaukee.

After ordination, Fr. Michael returned to Huntington for his first pastoral assignment. In 1991 he left the Capuchins and joined the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. His first assignment was as associate pastor at Blessed Sacrament in Milwaukee ('91-'94). He then became the associate pastor at Mary Queen of Heaven in West Allis. In 1999, he became pastor there until being appointed administrator at St. Mary's.

Alumni Spotlight

In upcoming issues, we'd like to feature information about alumni from all classes at St. Mary. We encourage you to send us a short description of recent accomplishments, information about your career, family or hobbies, wedding or birth announcements – anything you'd like to share with former friends and classmates.

Mail updates to the school office, attention St. Mary Alumni Committee, or email: stmarymfalum@stmarymf.org



**ST MARY PARISH SCHOOL
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SPRING 2012

ST. MARY ALUMNI NEWS

St. Mary School Recommended for Accreditation

Good News! St. Mary has once again been recommended for accreditation by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Association. The accreditation cycle spans seven years and culminates with a two-day site visit. The accreditation process is designed to evaluate compliance with specific standards, but more importantly is a process that stimulates reflection and helps in the effort to achieve excellence in our school.

The school staff and leadership team spent an exorbitant amount of time preparing for the site visit. The difficult work began last year when they completed the self-study process to identify long-range goals. This fall, they began the process of collecting data to provide evidence of compliance that would also help the visiting team to experience the wonderful sense of community that is present in our school. While it will be some time before receiving the final report, the team chair shared the following comments in her initial report.

"The Visiting Team for St. Mary Parish School would like to acknowledge the warm hospitality offered by the school community during the site visit that took place on October 26 and 27, 2011. It was apparent that the members of your school community put many hours into preparing for this visit. The Visiting Team worked carefully to examine the evidence to verify that your school is in compliance with the WRISA Standards and the expectations for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee."

"There is a long history of Catholic school education at St. Mary and your school has made a significant educational contribution to the broader community. We congratulate you on completing this important part of the accreditation process. We thank you for your hospitality and for the opportunity to be a part of your school community during this time."

Celebrating 35 Years

The Class of 1976 celebrated their 35th reunion year with a school tour, Mass and dinner with former classmates on Saturday, September 10, 2011. Thank you to the class for the monetary contribution made to the school which was used to purchase flat screen monitors for the computer lab.



How Can We Help? Students Answer the Challenge

By: Deacon Tom Monday

That was the question that our school staff and students asked of representatives of the Menomonee Falls Food Pantry when they visited in early October. The response was, “could you provide some cereal for the pantry?” The gauntlet was thrown on a Tuesday, the challenge proclaimed on Wednesday, and the fulfillment was up to the students. Knowing our Parish theme of this year, “Live Jesus, Practice Gratitude,” the work began...with a goal of a Friday completion.

And, what a completion it was. Our school students brought in 540 packages of cereal...enough to fill three vehicles! Mrs. Joyner, Mr. Paul, Deacon Buck Butn and Deacon Tom Monday filled the trunks and back seats of their cars and then took off for the Pantry, where the boxes overflowed the receiving area.

St. Mary students continue to learn and live what living their faith is all about.

Alumna Received and Delivers St. Mary Education



Can you imagine St. Mary School without the Activity Center? Without the cafeteria? Without computers, Smartboards, kindergartens, or the Science Lab?

My three younger sisters and I attended St. Mary School from 1st – 8th grades, and we had none of those things, but we received an excellent education. My mom (Marian) graduated from 8th grade here, and she and my dad (Ray Etzel) were married here in 1951 and just renewed their vows on their 60th anniversary in June. They are both extremely active in church activities. I met my husband Rick in grade school, and we were married here in 1975. Our daughter Kathy graduated from St. Mary's in 1995 and married Brian Farvour here in 2007. Now they and their daughter Isabelle are parish members. As you can clearly see, our family loves this parish!

Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a teacher. I organized “nursery schools” for the neighborhood kids and did a lot of babysitting. I admired all of the School Sisters of St. Francis and the lay teachers at St. Mary's, but I especially liked my sixth grade teacher, Miss Ruckriegel. That was when I decided I wanted to be a sixth grade teacher.

That's what happened! I began my teaching career at St. Anthony School for five years, and then I moved to St. Mary's and have been here for 33 years. I have seen many changes in pastors, principals, teaching methods, and technology and have taught in six different homerooms. I have formed wonderful friendships with other teachers. I have loved getting to know all of my students throughout the years, and it has been a real pleasure getting to know entire families. Lately it's been fun to begin teaching the children of my former students!

I feel fortunate to have been able to teach every single academic subject throughout the years. Currently I teach 6th grade Social Studies, Language, and Literature, and 7th grade Religion. The 6th grade “Notepad Business”, the ancient Egypt projects, the “Passover/Seder” celebration, and the service project of helping at the St. Vincent de Paul Meal Program are some of my favorite activities. It's so important to see the religious education and values develop in the students through the years. Witnessing their “Living Jesus” has been truly inspirational. I am also the co-director of the Destination Imagination, am in charge of the Spelling Bees, and help with Student Council activities.

My husband and I have helped work on the Auction committees. the “For All Generations” campaign, Vacation Bible School, St. Ben's Meal Program, and the Menomonee Falls Food Pantry. We are active in the M.F. Historical Society and Neighborhood Watch programs. I enjoy traveling, walking, cheering for our Wisconsin sports teams, baking pies, and spending time with friends and family (especially our new granddaughters, Isabelle!).

I truly feel that St. Mary's is the place to be, and I believe that I have received as much as I have given during my years here.

Diane (Etzel) Harley

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Where Are They Now?

Vernon Kreuser, Class of 1957, shared his update: In October of 2009 I retired and took the winter off and enjoyed being home instead of fighting the snow covered roads, etc. In spring I started volunteering for Hartford Community Service Inc. in Hartford WI. Their main goal is to raise money to give to other organizations to help them achieve their goals, give scholarships, and support the community in general (police, fire dept, food pantry, etc.). Their main fundraiser consists of running a Haunted House every weekend in October. The yearly project starts in late April with changing many ideas into new themes for the coming season. Usually there are about 10 or 12 individuals that show up every weekend to start the process of removing last season's ideas and creating new ones. I helped get it ready for the new season and then the 10 days it is was open during October. During operation it takes anywhere from a minimum of 30 people to sometimes as high as 70 people for operation. I enjoy helping with this all-volunteer organization.

Shannon Gaszak Farrington, Class of 1994, is married with 3 children and is working for Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare as a senior systems analyst. She's married to B.J. Farrington and lives in the Town of Polk, WI

Thomas Gaszak, Class of 1998, is married to Kelly and is employed as a pharmacist for Walgreens. He lives in Pleasant Prairie, WI.

Kevin Gaszak, Class of 2003, is currently attending UWM and lives in Germantown. He works for Standard Parking when not attending school.

Barbara (Packee) Mikolajczyk, Class of 1984, lives in Muskego and is a Senior Project Manager at American Transmission Co.

Kelly Gaglione (Schardt), Class of 1983, has been promoted to Vice President at Kahler Slater, Milwaukee, and will be part of the three-person executive leadership team. One of the many challenges of her expanded role is to lead strategic marketing and other firm-wide initiatives.

Pius XI HS National Honor Society Induction Ceremony included **Conor Pitterle, Kyra Porter and Jacob Tenaglia (St. Mary School Class of 2009)**.