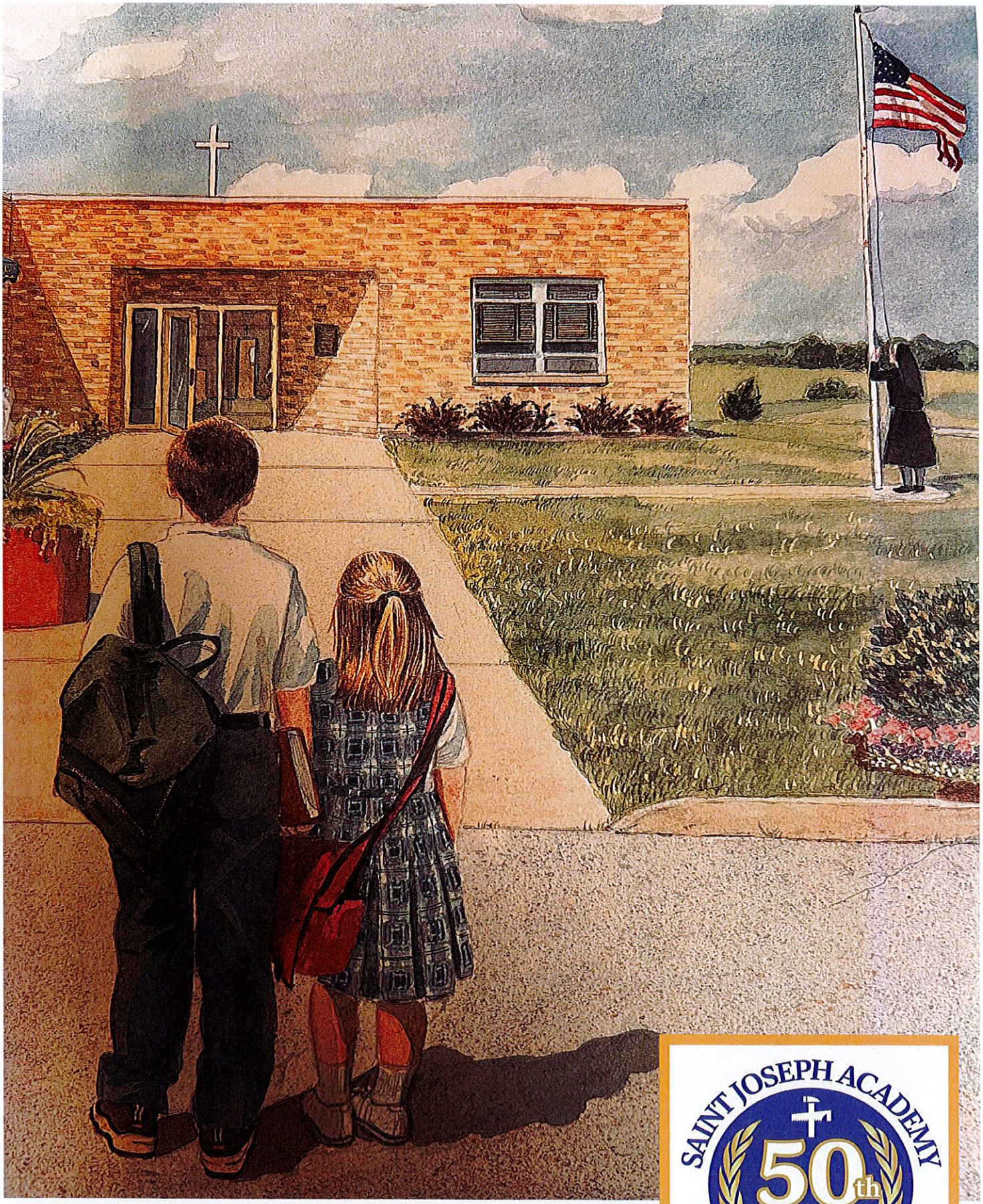


This artwork by former St. Joseph Academy art teacher Wendy Fleury depicts students approaching the school in Walton. Created originally to commemorate the school's previous anniversary, Mrs. Fleury's daughter, Hailey Kees, carries on the legacy as the school's current art teacher.

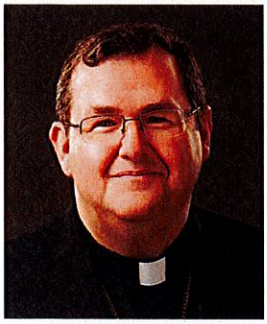
SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY
50th
ANNIVERSARY
WALTON

September, 2026

Dear St. Joseph Academy Community,

With profound gratitude and joy, I join the faithful of the Diocese of Covington in congratulating the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. Joseph Academy.

For five decades, St. Joseph Academy has stood as a beacon of faith, learning and service in our local Church. What began as a bold act of trust in God's providence has grown into a vibrant educational ministry that has shaped the minds, hearts and souls of countless young people. Generations of students have been blessed by an education that seeks not only academic excellence but also the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.



Bishop John Iffert

The story of St. Joseph Academy is inseparable from the story of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker themselves. Founded in the Diocese of Covington, the charism of the Sisters centers around total abandonment to God through an all-embracing dedication to his Church. When they opened the Academy in 1976, they embraced that mission with courage, sacrifice and unwavering hope.

The spirit that animated the founding Sisters can be found in the words they adopted as their community motto: **"Here I am, Lord, I come to do Your will."** In establishing St. Joseph Academy, the Sisters answered God's call with generosity, and their "yes" has borne abundant fruit. Through years of faithful service, they have built a school community where children are known, loved, challenged and encouraged to recognize God's presence in their lives.

The patronage of St. Joseph is especially fitting for this anniversary. As the faithful guardian of the Holy Family, St. Joseph carried out his vocation with humility, diligence and trust. In much the same way, the Sisters have quietly devoted themselves to the care and formation of young people. Their work has often been accomplished without recognition or acclaim, but its impact can be seen in the lives of alumni, families, parishes and communities throughout our diocese.

A milestone such as this invites us to reflect with gratitude on all those who have contributed to the Academy's mission. We remember the founding Sisters whose vision made this school possible. We thank the many religious and lay teachers, administrators, staff members, parents, benefactors and volunteers who have shared in that vision over the years. We thank the priests who have served All Saints Parish and worked cooperatively with the SSJWs in fostering the school. Together, they have all helped create an environment where faith and reason flourish side by side.

As we celebrate this golden anniversary, we also look to the future with confidence. The mission of Catholic education remains as important today as it was 50 years ago. Our world needs young people who are grounded in faith, formed in virtue, committed to service and prepared to lead with integrity. St. Joseph Academy continues to answer that need with excellence and devotion.

As we celebrate this golden anniversary, I also invite young women throughout our diocese to prayerfully consider whether God may be calling them to religious life. The witness of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker reminds us that a generous "yes" to God's call can bear fruit far beyond what we can imagine. For 50 years, their consecrated lives have enriched our parishes, schools, and communities, and their joyful service continues to be a powerful sign of God's love at work in the world. If you feel even the slightest stirring in your heart toward a vocation to religious life, do not be afraid to bring that desire to prayer. Speak with a trusted spiritual guide, seek the Lord's will, and consider whether He may be inviting you to share in the charism and mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker. The Church needs women of faith, courage and generosity who are willing to dedicate their lives to the service of God and His people.

On behalf of the Diocese of Covington, I offer my heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker. May God bless you for your faithful witness and generous service. Through the intercession of St. Joseph, may St. Joseph Academy continue to flourish as a place where young people encounter Christ and grow into the men and women God calls them to be.

In gratitude,

+ John C. Iffert

Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Looking back to the start

Sister Patricia Jean Cushing
Contributor

In looking back at our founding years, I ran across the March 17, 1972 report of the then "All Saints Parish School Board." It stated that the "maintaining of our school has been a topic of great importance and discussion for the past years." Enrollment had dropped to 32 children. The report continued to say, "In December



Sister Patricia Jean Cushing points to the framed watercolor featured on the front page of this St. Joseph Academy 50th anniversary supplement.

(1971), the Diocesan School Board felt the parish should give serious consideration to the closing of the school at the end of the '71-'72 school year."

Sister Evelyn Fugazzi, SCN, who was acting principal at the time along with the school board members stated their particular reasons for wanting to retain the school to the Diocesan School Board; namely, "We are deeply concerned with the religious education and survival of our parish. If the younger generation is not trained and educated in their religion, we cannot expect them to carry on the work of the Church. We, as Christians, cannot sit back and say, 'God will provide!' The old saying might well apply that 'God helps those who help themselves!'"

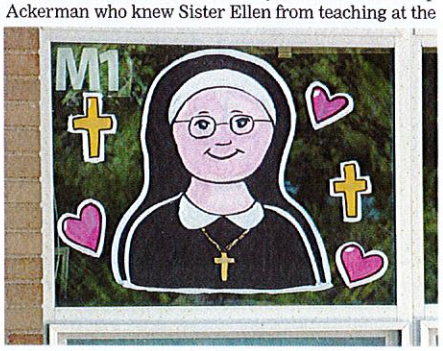
A letter was sent to Bishop Richard Ackerman requesting prayers and guidance. Communication with requests for Sisters were sent to the Provincial Superiors of the Benedictine Sisters, Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Divine Providence and to the provincial-elect of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. All responded expressing their deep concern for their situation but they would be unable to help staff All Saints School.

"After exerting all efforts possible to find a way to maintain All Saints School, the Parish School Board has come to the regrettable decision that there is no other choice than to close the school."

This report was signed by the then pastor, Father Paul Tenhundfeld, Sister Evelyn, principal, Mr. George (Abe) Ryan, president, Mr. Donald Albers, Mr. Robert Kelly, Mrs. Richard Ryan and Mrs. William Krekeler.

Little did the school board and parishioners know back in 1972 that Providentially the Good Lord had indeed heard the cry of their heart and was preparing another community of religious Sisters to take over the administration of their school.

In 1973, Sister Ellen and 17 Sisters with her had broken off from the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. Bishop Ackerman who knew Sister Ellen from teaching at the



A caricature window painting of Sister Patricia Jean's smiling face welcomed students back to school in August. The work was created by art teacher Hailey Kees.

then Cathedral School which was located in the current Curia building, who was a spiritual father to her during the troubling times of their separation, and who was instrumental in their approval from Rome to found a new community in 1974, welcomed them into the Diocese of Covington with open arms.

The Bishop gave the responsibility of finding a home for the Sisters to Mr. Charles Deters. Living in Walton himself, he knew of property available to purchase. Thus, the Sisters came to live in Walton just a few blocks away from All Saints Parish.

Shortly after settling in, the parishioners went to Father Joseph Collins to ask if the Sisters would have a religious bible school in the parish. Father Collins had come out of retirement, being appointed temporary pastor with the sudden death of Father Tenhundfeld.

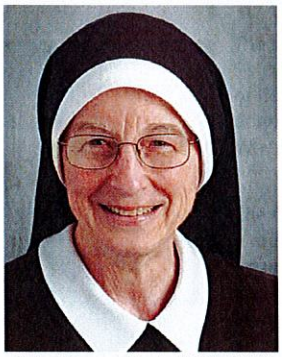

Mother Ellen (1976)


Sister Mary Petronilla (1976–1983)


Sister Virginia Marie (1983–1993)


Sister Margery (1993–1995)


Sister Patricia Jean (1995–2006; 2020–present)


Sister Therese Marie (2006–2008)


Sister Elizabeth Ann (2008–2020)

Soon afterwards, parishioners approached Father Collins again, this time asking, "Would you ask the Sisters to reopen the school." Sister Ellen (then Mother Ellen, superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker) was given permission by Bishop Ackerman to do so "not as a parish school, but as a private Academy" in the parish of All Saints.

With nothing short of a leap of faith, the Sisters assumed the responsibility for the religious education of the children of All Saints Parish first, next to Catholics outside the parish and then to non-Catholics (still practiced to this day), and the financial obligation of maintaining a school as it was written in the very first $1 lease agreement for the use of the 4-room school house "in order to fulfill their apostolic work of teaching."

This agreement was signed by Father Paul Krebs, Mother Ellen, Sister Margery, and Bernie Vaske who was president of All Saints Finance Committee at the time. It was dated July 21, 1976.

Throughout the years, many families and their children have been served by the Sisters presence. Pastors have welcomed the Sisters and allowed them to grow their school on church property as is shown repeatedly by the expansion of a new wing under Father Paul Krebs and the parishioners, the addition of a preschool now housed in this building, and the addition of a day care center named after Mother Ellen, hence the MEC center, under Msgr. John Schulte as pastor. It was also during Msgr. Schulte's time that he allowed the Sisters to put the name "St. Joseph Academy Elementary School" on the building.

When Doctor Waller retired, he gave the Sisters "the first right of refusal" to purchase the medical building across the street on Beatrice. The community of Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker (under then Mother Celeste Marie, as superior) did so, hence the name, "Waller Hall" where we currently have five classrooms. The Sisters shortly after its purchase, asked Msgr. Schulte if he would like to use the upstairs for parish offices. Seizing the opportunity, he agreed to exchange $1 per year for its use. (The parish offices went from the back porch of the rectory, to the white house, to the current Waller Hall upstairs).

So, began an unusual and possibly unique arrangement which exists in the diocese to the current day. "It has been nothing less than a Providential arrangement."

Someone recently asked Mother Christina and I what Mother Ellen would say to us if she were here. Choking back tears, we replied, "We hope she would be proud of us!"

Thank you for allowing us to serve you. We have been blessed in so many ways since the question was first posed, "Would you just reopen our school."

Sister Patricia Jean Cushing, SJW, is the principal of St. Joseph Academy, Walton.

St. Joseph Academy: Education in faith

Kendra McQuire
Contributor

For 50 years, the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker have dedicated their lives to serving the children of this community. Joined in mission by lay teachers and staff, they have provided an authentic Catholic education to each child who entered their doors.


Kendra McGuire

As we celebrate this milestone, it is good to reflect on what 50 years of Christ-centered education means. At St. Joseph Academy, children learn to excel in their studies. They learn to read and write and communicate with others. They take on the challenges of mathematics and science. They learn the history of Kentucky, the world and this great nation. And they are enriched by their art classes, develop a love of literature through Library and strengthen their bodies through PE classes. And all of these courses are good and important to their growth and development.

But the true gift of St. Joseph Academy is teaching the children about Jesus Christ's love for us and teaching them to love God. They do this in so many ways but most visibly by starting each school day with Mass, praying continuously and teaching children how to serve one another.

You see, St. Joseph Academy knows the most important lessons in life do not come from a textbook. While school work is very important, it comes second to our relationship with Jesus.

And this is what makes a Catholic education at St. Joseph Academy so special. It is a place where families become a community centered around Jesus. A place where you can raise your children together, become friends and help one another during life's ups and downs. It is a place where the Christian values you are teaching at home are reinforced and lived out here at school. It is a place of welcome and safety, that if we fall short of living like Jesus, we can seek mercy and forgiveness and begin anew.

And when the children who have experienced this education in faith and academics grow up, we pray they choose to live in this same way, teaching the next generation to know and serve God too.

We are not only celebrating the gift of St. Joseph Academy, we are also celebrating the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and the faculty and staff who continue to make this school a great place for students to learn and grow.

With gratitude, I wish to thank those who have accepted the call to teach and work at St. Joseph for the 2026-27 school year and all those who have done so over the past 50 years.

What a blessing you are to this community and to the Diocese of Covington. May God continue to bless you and the families you serve for many years to come!

Kendra McGuire is superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

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50 years of faith and blessings

Mike Shannon
Contributor

While America celebrates its 250th anniversary, the Diocese of Covington, the city of Walton, and All Saints Parish in Walton, Ky., are also celebrating an important milestone: the 50th anniversary of St. Joseph Academy. Yes, exactly five decades ago the relatively new order of nuns who had separated from the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and then settled in Walton under the name of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker re-opened the grade school at All Saints which had closed several years previously.

The re-birth (and re-naming) of the school reenergized the parish and brought forth a multitude of blessings to all involved, as well as to the community at large. From its inception to the present day, St. Joseph Academy has been a resounding success, and it's clear that the school and the Sisters who have run it have been under the constant protection of their namesake, St. Joseph, and Our Blessed Mother.

Mother Ellen served as the first principal of St. Joseph Academy but only for the first year. She was succeeded by Sister Mary Petronilla (1976-1983), Sister Virginia Marie (1983-1993), Sister Margery (1993-1995), Sister Patricia Jean (1995-2006), Sister Therese Marie (2006-2008), Sister Elizabeth Ann (2008-2020), and, once again, Sister Patricia Jean (2020-to the present). Each Sister has brought her own talents and skills to their apostolic ministry, but more importantly every one of them has been guided by the school's mission statement, a vision which clearly delineates the first and most important goal of any authentic Catholic school.

The very first paragraph of the school's mission statement promulgated in 1976 reads: "A Catholic school has one primary reason for existence: to instruct students in the truths of our faith, so that, accepting these truths, they may live, that God 'through Jesus Christ may carry out in them all that which is pleasing to him' (Heb. 13:21). Hence, basic to our philosophy as Catholic educators at St. Joseph Academy is the instruction in the principles of Christian faith and morals — principles that may serve our students as guidelines in worthy earthly living and in attainment of eternal beatitude."

In the beginning, St. Joseph Academy was housed in the parish's original four-room school building, with each room home to two of the eight grades. Space was so limited that the principal's office was literally a closet in the middle of the building, and according to Sister Patricia Jean the four rooms were so close together that to deliver the morning announcements all she had to do was "step out into the hall and start talking!"

In 1986, to accommodate the growing enrollment, an addition to the school was built by the parish. The school reached peak enrollment in 2001, the year of its 25th anniversary, with its 296 students filling two classes per grade plus a kindergarten. In order to fit everyone into the school's celebratory 25th anniversary group photo the school moved en masse to the gym at the nearby Walton-Verona public high school.

While never abandoning for a moment the school's primary mission, the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and the lay teachers who have complemented their efforts have also never neglected the academic and social needs of their students. Students of the school have received many academic honors, and the strength of the curriculum is evident in the fact that the curriculum is used by parents who home school their children.

Over the years St. Joseph the Worker students have also, in imitation of the Sisters, exhibited amazing generosity in supporting numerous charities and good works. A short list of these activities includes: volunteering five days in Appalachia with Father Paul Beiting, making a CD recording of the rosary, supporting a Catholic Order of Foresters' winter clothing drive and conducting "penny wars" to benefit the diocesan Seminarian Gift Bag Program and the DCCH Center for Children and Families.

And always, the overriding purpose of these activities has been emphasized to the students, as Sister Elizabeth Ann told those students who were heading to the studio to record the rosary in 2014, "We are doing this to raise money





Photos courtesy of St. Joseph Academy

(top) This file photo shows the exterior of the original St. Joseph Academy, Walton, as it appeared in 1976.

(bottom) In 1985, under the leadership of Father Paul Krebs, a new addition to St. Joseph's Academy was constructed, as seen in progress in this file photo.

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Congratulations from our family of former Saint Joseph Academy students

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for the school but, more importantly, we're doing this to help people grow closer to Jesus and Mary. That's the main goal of this."

While All Saints Church does not subsidize the school, the parishioners themselves support it generously through the DPAA and, particularly by volunteering their help with two key annual fund raisers: the best fish dinner for six weeks during every Lenten season and a barbeque Pig Fest held every Father's Day weekend. The food offered at each event is so good that many non-Catholics in the area step up to the plate, so to speak, each year.



Mother Ellen Curran was the first principal of St. Joseph Academy when it was founded in 1976.

This is not to say that keeping the school going for 50 years has been easy. It has taken a lot of hard work, a lot of sacrifices and a lot of dedication — but the school has friends in very high places who look after it. As the indefatigable Sister Patricia Jean says confidently, "God always provides for us."

And the students themselves — the main beneficiaries of the Academy — how do they feel about the school? Well, one may judge that by considering the experience of Beth Kahmann (the daughter of Al and Cathy Baumgartner) who graduated from St. Joseph Academy, sent her four children to the school, and has been teaching at the school now for more than a decade and a half.

Today, St. Joseph Academy has 80 students enrolled in grades preschool through eight, with an additional 70 or so children (aged 1-5) enrolled at any given time in the school's child care center, named after Mother Ellen. The school would welcome additional grade school students, of course, but as Sister Patricia Jean notes the small class sizes enable the school to practice "quality over quantity."

By any measure one wishes to use, St. Joseph Academy is a treasure worth guarding, sustaining and preserving for future generations. Former All Saints pastor Father Matthew Cushing (now the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Park Hills) still serves the Academy as the school's IT Director, and he knows the school as well as anyone. Let us give him the final word as we celebrate the school's auspicious 50th anniversary: "What makes St. Joseph Academy so important is none other than the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker. It is important for the children to see examples of what it means to dedicate oneself to God in such a loving, sacrificial way. They see that example not only in the Sisters' tireless work ethic, but especially in the Sisters' lives. The children see them in their habits which is a visible sign of the life to come, and they see their life of prayer via prayers at school and most especially via daily Mass. Their love of the Faith is contagious, and it impacts the children for the better. Please pray for many vocations to the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and pray for St. Joseph Academy that it may flourish for another 50 years and beyond!"





(above, top) Father Paul Krebs, former pastor of All Saints Parish, Walton, blesses a tree amongst a group of onlooking students in this file photo.

(above) Members of the St. Joseph Academy community help to set up a sign advertising the Pig Fest, one of the school's most important fundraisers.

(below) Sister Anita Marie, SJW, punches a student's lunch ticket. For 50 years, the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker have fostered, cared for and taught at St. Joseph's Academy.





Students asked to recognize the virtue of St. Joseph in others as community gathers in commemoration of St. Joseph Academy's 50 year anniversary

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

A whole community gathered together, Aug. 26, to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of St. Joseph Academy, Walton. A significant day for the school, Aug. 26 marks the very first "first day of school" in 1976 for the rural academy.

A Mass was held in celebration at the neighboring All Saints Parish — as parishioners send their children to the school, which is run by the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker, but also who share both physical proximity and history with one another in forming Walton's Catholic community.

Joining sisters and community members was Bishop John Iffert, the celebrant of the Mass who processed into a church full of families, supporters, faculty, staff, students and fellow clergy — all of whom he welcomed at the start of his homily.

"I'm really pleased to be able to celebrate this important day," he said, "and thank you for coming out to celebrate St. Joseph Academy and to celebrate the ministry of the sisters for 50 years here in this place."

Reflecting also on the 250th anniversary of the United States celebrated this year, Bishop Iffert reflected on the "patriot" St. Joseph. "We see in him the model of fatherhood, the model of a man who set himself aside for service to Jesus and Mary, for service to God and God's beloved people — and we see in him every man-made virtue, and we see in him one who we would like to imitate, whose intercession we desire."

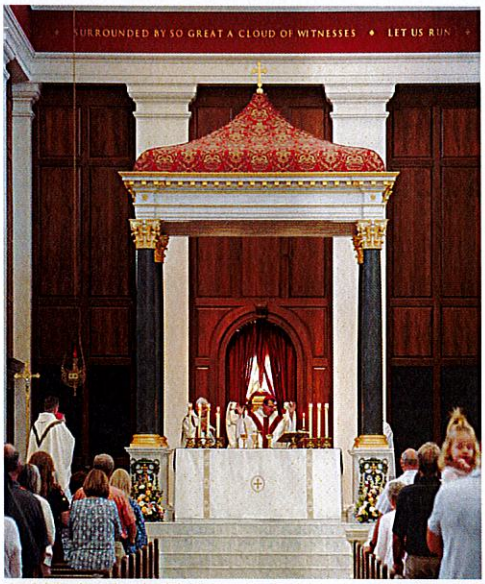
"As we celebrate this anniversary," he said, "we think of all the people who worked shoulder to shoulder, side by side."

He asked students present to look at the peers they're close to — in the classroom, or on the playground — and ask themselves: "Where do I see Jesus in this person? Where do they remind me of Jesus Christ? How do they remind me of the love of God?" And, furthermore, "Which one of my teachers reminds me of Joseph? Which one of my classmates has the virtue of St. Joseph? ...From whom should I learn something today? Who is being sent here in our community to teach me something about the way of God today?"

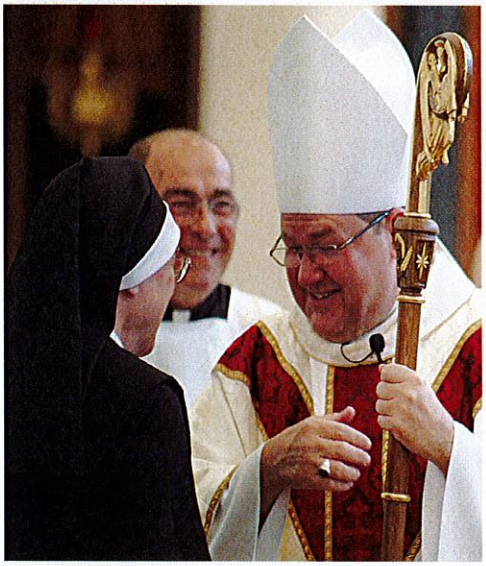
"Here in our own school," Bishop Iffert said, "here in our own Church, here in our community, in whom do I see St. Joseph today? Who do I need to be my example and my prayer?"

"We don't want to miss the opportunity that is given to us here in the school ... to grow in virtue, to put on the mind of Christ, to live in his love and to be led into his peace." Bishop Iffert said, "I hope, young people, that you're recognizing the formation that you're receiving from these people who love you and care for you."

He concluded with more gratitude, saying, "Today we give thanks to God for St. Joseph Academy — for their 50 years of forming people in that vision of the civilization of life, the kingdom of God."







Bishop John Iffert joined the celebration of St. Joseph Academy's 50th anniversary as homilist and celebrant of Mass, August 26. To hear a piece of Bishop Iffert's homily, scan the QR code.

(left) With his hands raised, Bishop John Iffert prays at the altar of All Saints Parish, Walton, during a Mass commemorating the 50-year anniversary of their neighboring school, St. Joseph Academy, operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker.

(above) Families with young children stand for the final blessing.

(below) Priests and deacons who have previously served the community of All Saints Parish and St. Joseph Academy join together to commemorate the schools anniversary at the celebration Mass.

(bottom, right) The sign of peace is shared between the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and the community.

(bottom, left) Bishop Iffert greets a Sister of St. Joseph the Worker before the celebration Mass, sharing a laugh.

Baker photos





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St. Joseph Academy offers homeschool families support, community and faith

Laura Keener
Editor

If any homeschool parents have ever felt like chasing after the yellow school bus as it made its way through the neighborhood, know that you're not alone.

Anne Garnett, a mother of seven, understands that feeling well. She and her husband, Tim, have homeschooled all of their seven children, whose ages range from 27 to 8. For Mrs. Garnett, homeschooling began as a calling and became a way to shape learning around each child's needs.

Mrs. Garnett admits that she never imagined herself being a homeschool mom. But when her first daughter turned five and it was time to enroll in school, she felt a tug on her heart.

"I love the idea of being able to just be with my children," she said.

She said homeschooling has allowed her to accommodate each child's different learning styles and needs by "shaping their curriculum to them rather than the other way around," she said. "It's been a real blessing."

Mrs. Garnett is also honest about the hard parts. "Homeschooling is full of lots of joy and lots of fulfillment, but it also has many challenges," Mrs. Garnett said.

That is why the Homeschooling Support program at St. Joseph Academy, Walton, has meant so much to her family.

The program is an affordable academic hybrid option for students in grades 1 through 8. Students attend St. Joseph Academy on Mondays and Thursdays, arrive by 7:30 a.m., begin the day with Holy Mass at 8 a.m., and are dismissed at 3 p.m. On the other three school days, students work at home on teacher-assigned lessons.

For Mrs. Garnett, the program offered the best of both worlds.

"I loved the idea of having that support for those two days a week at school," she said. She also liked that her children would get social time and learn from someone other than mom. After her first child joined in third grade, the family stayed with the program.

"It was a huge success," Mrs. Garnett said. "It has allowed my husband and I to continue our dream of homeschooling, but at the same time being able to outsource some of the more difficult aspects of homeschooling." As children get older and lessons become more advanced, she said, "it's just really great to have that support those two days a week."

St. Joseph the Worker Sister Patricia Jean Cushing said the program grew from a simple desire to serve families. "The sisters are trying to meet the needs of the whole family," she said. Homeschooling families first asked whether the school could offer them space. Over time, St. Joseph Academy invited homeschool students into the regular school program two days each week.

Now, Sister Patricia Jean said, the students are part of the normal school day. "You can't even tell them apart from the traditional students," she said. "They wear our uniform. They have the same routine."

In the lower grades, teachers send home packets and checklists. In the upper grades, assignments are posted in Google Classroom.

The program also offers flexibility. All classes are available on an a la carte basis, allowing families to choose the subjects that best support their homeschool plan, including religion, language arts, math, science or history.

That option, Mrs. Garnett said, "It just is another example of meeting the family and their needs where they're at."

Faith is central to the program. "The sisters just really create an atmosphere where faith is first," Mrs. Garnett said.

Sister Patricia Jean said families from different backgrounds are welcome, while also knowing the Catholic faith is part of daily life at the school.

"Everyone is welcome here," she said. "But you know, we teach the Catholic faith. They will go to Mass."

For families with children in both the five-day school and the homeschool support program, Sister Patricia Jean said the setup can make daily life easier.

"It's one campus, one church," she said. "One pickup, one dropoff. It's a win-win."

Mrs. Garnett has seen the program help her children prepare for the future. One son moved from homeschooling into Covington Catholic High School, and she said the transition was smooth.

"I really credit the homeschool program that he was under at St. Joe's for all those years, with preparing him definitely academically, socially," she said.

Even with the challenges, Mrs. Garnett remains grateful. "There are moments that you just want to chase that yellow school bus down the street and tell them they forgot a few kids," she joked. Still, she said homeschooling has been "a very edifying experience" for her family.



Keener photo

St. Joseph Academy students pose with a model skeleton in the school's science classroom. Science is one of the classes that homeschooling families can choose to allow their child to take "a la carte" at St. Joseph Academy.

Childcare at St. Joseph Academy grows from a foundation of faith

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

As a foundational principal of St. Joseph Academy, meeting the needs of the whole family is a priority. Over the years, the school expanded to include kindergarteners, preschoolers, to a daycare program and a homeschooling program.

Formerly home to both programs, the Mother Ellen Center (MEC), named for the school's first principal, is the home of the childcare programming at St. Joseph Academy.

The school's daycare program is offered to children aged one through five, with after-school services for children of all ages, and is state-licensed, with classrooms organized by age group. Summer care is also offered for families in need of such aid. Currently, the daycare program is in a "boom" of growth, according to St. Joseph Academy principal Sister Patricia Jean Cushing.

Angie McNay, who is the daycare's current director and mother of seven herself whose own children attended St. Joseph Academy, attributes this growth to the program's good reputation — and the faith-centered foundation that all arms of the school are built upon.

While not all families are Catholic, they "like that faith based, homey feel," Mrs. McNay said. "All the children are like our own, and we love them all."

Children are taught the Catholic faith and participate in school Masses in the daycare regardless of their background, a fact that Sister Patricia Jean emphasizes when meeting families interested in their programming.

"I feel every part of the school is an extension of what the sisters started a long time ago," Mrs. McNay said, "a very faith-based foundation. That's how we run everything, and it's growing. Families are very happy, the children are happy and the staff is happy, as well."


Keener photo

Preschool students learn with play food alongside an instructor at St. Joseph's Academy, Walton.