

ST. MARY'S

THE ORBITER



"Encourage one another & build each other up" - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Welcome Back!

We hope everyone had a great summer break! We are so happy to be back! We had a very busy Summer gearing up for an amazing school year! All staff who were able to attend went to a Teacher Institute Day where we were able to meet and talk with other school administrators and staff within the Diocese. It was a great day and we also were able to celebrate Mass and speak with Bishop Godfrey - Mullen for a bit. We are so lucky to have the people we do here at St. Mary's!

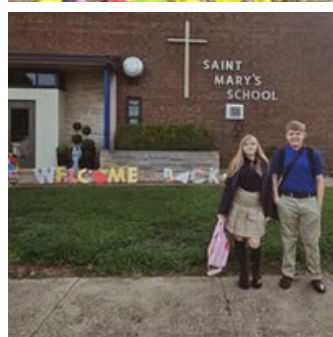
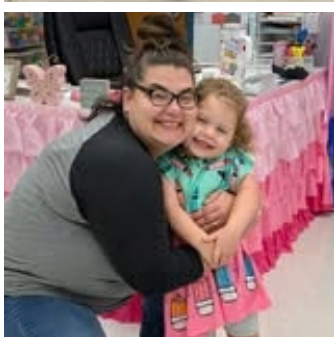
Upcoming Important Dates

- **October 8th** - Prayer Partner/Volunteer Mass
- **October 9th** - No School
- **October 12th** - Columbus Day - No School
- **October 14th** - Picture Retake Day
- **October 20th** - Art Club
- **October 21st** - End of 1st Quarter
- **October 22nd** - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- **October 24th** - 8th Grade Bowling Event
- **October 27th** - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- **October 29th** - Trunk or Treat
- **October 30th** - No School
- **November 8th** - Smorgasbord
- **November 12th** - Veterans Day Program/Mass
- **November 14th** - First Reconciliation
- **November 17th** - Art Club



Back to School

We were so happy to see everyone back after a long and busy summer!

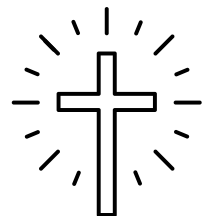
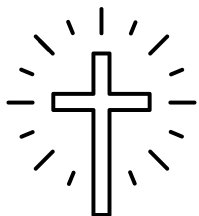


Back to School



26-27 Class

Class pictures from the first week of school!



August/September Spotlight



We are so thankful for Mr. Raber! If you're ever inside our school, there is a chance you'll run into Mr. Raber, and when you do, you'll be met with a smile, a wave, sometimes even a scare. You can often hear him walking down the halls whistling a tune or working hard to keep our school looking as amazing as it does! He is always willing to stop and lend a helping hand or even step in to complete tasks for those who are under the school's roof. He is kind, humble and has the heart of a servant. Thank you, Mr. Raber, for all that you do for St. Mary's school and church!

Mr. Buss stepped into the role as our leader, and he did so with ease and grace. He always greets with a smile, good morning or high-5 for the students. He has quickly become one of the students' favorite people. He is always lending a hand, willing to give his opinion to move towards a goal or an encouraging word, whether to staff or students. The students even think he's cool because he's willing to tell a joke or take a joke if they have one for him! We are thankful Mr. Buss said yes to the ministry he was called to do! Congratulations, Mr. Buss!



Rockets of the Month – September



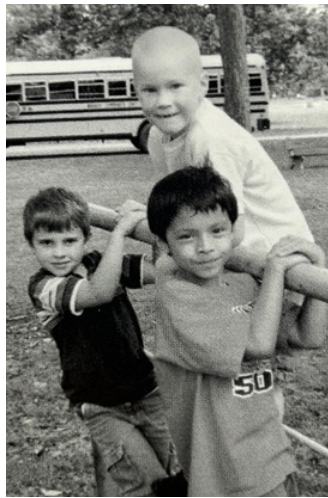
Our first Rocket of the Month is third grader Wesley Trapp. Wesley has a special gift for noticing others. When recess begins, he doesn't just look for his own friends, he looks around to see who may not have someone to play with. He often spends time playing with our younger students, especially those in kindergarten, and has even asked his teacher if she knows anyone who might need a friend. Wesley also shares God's love through his kindness. If someone is having a difficult day, he is quick to offer a conversation, an encouraging word, or one of his great big hugs. He has a remarkable ability to recognize when someone needs support, and he makes sure they know they are not alone. Wesley's compassion reminds us that being a leader doesn't always mean being the loudest person in the room. Sometimes it simply means noticing someone who needs a friend and choosing to be that friend.

Our second Rocket of the Month is sixth grader Evelyn Crummley. During Buddy Time recently, Evelyn found herself in a difficult situation when two younger students were having a disagreement. Instead of becoming frustrated or walking away, Evelyn responded with patience and gentleness. She listened carefully, offered thoughtful suggestions, and helped the two students find a solution they could both agree on. That moment showed remarkable maturity and reminded us that true peacemakers bring calm, kindness, and understanding into difficult situations. Evelyn is also a joy to have in the classroom. She works hard, maintains a positive attitude, and is always looking for ways to help others. She does all of this with wonderful humility, not seeking attention or praise but simply choosing to do what is right. Evelyn, your gentle spirit and caring heart are beautiful examples of Christ's love in action.

Remembering Steven Haase



Steven Daniel Haase went to be with the Lord on June 1, 2026. He was a 2019 graduate of St. Mary's Catholic School. Steven will be remembered as a loving son, brother, and friend whose kind heart and easygoing nature touched the lives of many. He found his greatest joy outdoors, especially while fishing and hunting. A dedicated member of the Mount Carmel FFA and Young Leaders, Steven took great pride in his hard work and accomplishments, including earning the prestigious Grain Production State Proficiency Award. He was especially proud to work alongside his family on Robert Haase Farms and was a faithful member of St. Mary's Catholic Church.





What I remember most about Steven was his ability to make anyone laugh or smile. He had a gift for cracking jokes and bringing joy to those around him. No matter what challenges came his way, he never let a bad day get the best of him and always seemed to enjoy life to the fullest. Steven had a big heart, and much of it was dedicated to his love of farming. Through Saint Mary's School, we gained more than just a classmate—we gained a lifelong friend who will be deeply missed. Many years have passed since we all sat together in a classroom, but the friendships and memories remained. Now, when we come together, we will not only reminisce on those memories but also grieve the future our friend never had the chance to experience.

Lauren Hall, SMS Classmate

Steven was such a great friend to so many people. At SMS, although he was always causing trouble in some way, you knew he had a big heart by the way he talked to his friends. If I was having a bad day, he was one of my first friends to check on me. As we grew up, he and I would go hunting and fishing together. Duck hunting was his favorite because we could talk to each other before the ducks came in, unlike deer or turkey hunting. That is who Steven was- the kind of person who loved talking with his friends and building real friendships. I am so thankful for the time we spent together and the friendship that we had.

Lillian Gottman, SMS Classmate



On my first day of Kindergarten, I was terrified but luckily one of the people I sat next to was Steven. He made me feel like everything was going to be alright. He wasn't nervous one bit and seemed entirely unfazed at the first day of school. In the 8th grade, he gave me the nickname Tyrone. I never understood why but it always makes me smile when I think about it. Definitely the goofiest, yet the most memorable name I ever had given to me. I'll never forget how when it came to PE, recess, or anything that could involve competition Steven was almost always first every time. I will forever remember his outstanding confidence, ambition and dedication; he truly was such an amazing person. I am so very blessed to have known Steven and he will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Olivia John Cusick, SMS Classmate

Steven was always the one in our class to lighten the mood and put a smile on everyone's face. He made everyone laugh even in times we were supposed to be serious. I'll always remember his laugh and dancing, especially when he was dancing to "Hit the Quan". I loved playing basketball in P.E. and recess with Steven because we were both so competitive and he made every game fun. He and I would talk about his love for the Golden State Warriors and how he thought he was as talented as Steph Curry. While our SMS class was always close, Steven managed to be close friends with everyone. These memories from SMS with him and our class will be with me forever. Steven will always be remembered as bringing laughter and joy to so many, including me.

Savannah Zimmerman, SMS Classmate



Memories



Some people are woven into your childhood memories, and Steven is one of those people for me. From starting preschool together to spending all of our years at SMS, Steven was a constant part of so many memories from my childhood. When I think back on those years, there are several things that come to mind. With a graduating class of just 14 students and only two boys, Steven and Bradley often had no choice but to go along with whatever the girls wanted. Steven would always dress up with us during Catholic Schools Week and happily take on whatever role we assigned him in our talent shows. That willingness to join in and make everyone laugh is something I'll always remember. Another thing that stood out about Steven was his athleticism. Everyone wanted him on their team because if Steven was playing for you, your chances of winning were pretty good. During kickball games on the "big field," kids on the opposing team would back up almost to the church, hoping to catch one of his home-run kicks. When I think back on my years at SMS, Steven will always be a part of those memories. I am grateful for the time we spent growing up together and will cherish those memories forever. He will be greatly missed.

Ava Harrington, SMS Classmate



I was blessed to be Steven's Kindergarten teacher, and it was quite a memorable year. Mrs. Steckler & I had 24 in this class. We started school with our KDG room set up in the parish center because construction on the big new addition was not yet complete. One October morning we got the message that we could move in! I recall Steven being very excited to run back and forth across the alley carrying items into our new "home". My most favorite memory of Steven is from the MCHS senior walk thru. The graduates were parading down our hallway. Steven saw one of my Kindergartners, Barrett Alka. Steven's eyes lit up! He stopped the procession, picked Barrett up & swung him around! Later, when we were in front of church taking a group photo of our SMS students with the MCHS grads, there is another very clear memory. Steven approached me and asked: "Mrs. Spencer, will you take a picture of just Barrett & me?" Turns out Barrett's big brother, Draper, was one of Steven's very best friends. Steven's gesture made an impact on me. Even though the spotlight was on Steven, he turned it around to recognize a five year old. No moment nor person was insignificant to Steven.

Theresa Spencer, SMS Teacher

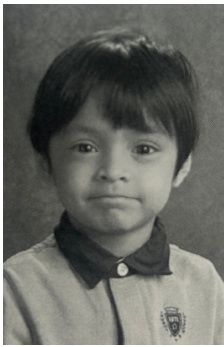


I taught Steven for four years at St. Mary's. He was a great kid even when he didn't like to do Math. He was one of 2 boys in a room full of girls. I doubt he would admit it, but he would have done anything to help those girls. By 8th grade year, he just sat back and went along with whatever shenanigans they were doing. He lost his shoe in the lake at Camp Carson, dressed up as a dalmatian for Halloween and wore checkered vans like the rest of the class. He was a great kid and I am happy to have known him.

Lori Stevens, SMS Teacher



Remembering Steven Haase



Eternal rest grant unto Steven, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

HOMECOMING

50TH ANNIVERSARY

We hope everyone had a great Homecoming weekend!

To the right is a picture of the St. Mary's Alumni MCHS Class of 1976!



CALLING ALL ALUMNI





ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Calling All Alumni!

Faith Learning Friendship A Brighter Tomorrow

Once a Rocket, Always a Rocket.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Help us build our alumni database and stay connected with the St. Mary's family.

THIS IS FOR ANYONE WHO HAS EVER ATTENDED St. Mary's Catholic School — even if you didn't "graduate" from our 8th grade class!

COMPLETE OUR ALUMNI FORM



Share memories



Receive school updates



Reconnect with classmates



Scan Here!

Mt. Carmel, Illinois

St. Mary's is working on building our Alumni Database and we need YOU to help us! If you attended St. Mary's please fill out this quick form so we can stay better connected! You can scan the QR code or fill out the paper form attached to the back of the Orbiter and return it to the school office!

If you are not already a part of the **St. Mary's School Alumni- Mt. Carmel, IL** Facebook Page make sure to go follow to stay in touch with fellow Alumni!

Homecoming

To celebrate Homecoming we wore Maroon and Gold Spirit Wear!



Sports



Softball



Softball celebrated their 8th graders and a great season! We are so proud of 8th grader Marisa Stevens!



Baseball

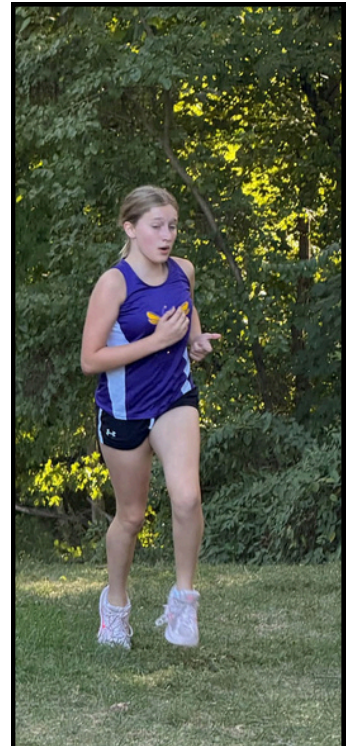
Baseball celebrated their 8th graders and an amazing season! We are so proud of 8th grader Graham Naas!

Sports

Cross Country

Cross Country finished their regular season and have done an amazing job this year!

Landon Winkles and Elin Swanson have finished the regular season undefeated within our team! We are so proud!



Updates

Baseball and Softball had great seasons this year and both won their round one regional games!

Boys and Girls basketball teams have started open gyms and are excited about the upcoming season!

Cheer has been practicing and are getting ready to cheer on the Rockets and the Yellowjackets!

HAPPY GRANDPARENTS DAY

What our students = LOVE = about their grandparents



They give me hugs!	Grandma makes the best cookies!	They always come to my games!	They play with me!	They take me places!	They do lots of things for me!
Everything!	Having sleepovers!	Going on walks with them!	I love making crafts with them!	They have lots of toys and they are nice to me!	Riding horses with them!
Going on field trips with them!	Giving them hugs and saying I love them!	Playing with dinosaurs with Papa!	Going to the park with them!	They pick me up from school sometimes!	Doing fun stuff with them!
They let me watch videos!	Going to Holiday World with them!	Going on golf cart rides with them!	They give me lots of pizza!	When Nanny bakes me brownies!	I love to hug them!
My Grampy is silly & my Grammy plays with me!	They play catch with me!	Going fishing with them!	When they play hide and seek with me!	Playing games with them!	Painting with Ya-Ya!
They are kind and loving!	When they cook me Frijoles!	Spending the night with Pop and DeDe!	When they come and visit!	Going out to eat with them!	YaYa always buys me books and Papa takes me mushroom hunting!
They are happy, kind, and funny!	My Grandpa gets me cereal in the morning and I call him Cereal Man!	They let us go to the movies and have ice cream!	They do crafts with me and take me hunting!	They are kind to me and make me laugh!	They always say yes to me!
They get me a bunch of sweet treats all the time!	When my Grandma cooks with me!	They teach me a lot of wisdom and valuable lessons!	My Grandma asks me about my day!	They play board games and card games with me!	My Grandpa is funny!
Going fishing with them!	They taught me how to play Baseball & how to drive a golf cart!	They taught me how to golf!	My Grandma and I cook together every Saturday!	They are kind!	They are prayerful!
They teach me a lot of things!	They give me candy and take me shopping!	They are very nice and give me lots of snacks!	My Grandma is an angel!	They are good examples!	They give me lots of hugs and kisses!

To all of our SMS Grandparents:
Thank you for loving, supporting, encouraging, and spoiling our Rockets! We are so grateful for you and all that you do!

Grandparents Day



Grandparents Day



Grandparents Day



Grandparents Day



Grandparents Day



Grandparents Day



Grandparents Day



August Virtue – Kindness

Something we talk a lot about here at St. Mary's is VBRD (Virtue-Based Restorative Discipline). To help encourage our students to be virtuous, our teachers utilize Virtue Circles in their classrooms at least once a week. It's a great way for students to learn respect, compassion, work on listening and speaking skills, and so much more!

The virtue of kindness is recognized as a Capital Virtue (directly counteracts the deadly sin of envy) and as one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. For August we had teachers help students practice the virtue of kindness.

Circle Questions:

- When has someone's kindness changed your day?
- How does kindness affect both you and others?

Ways students can practice:

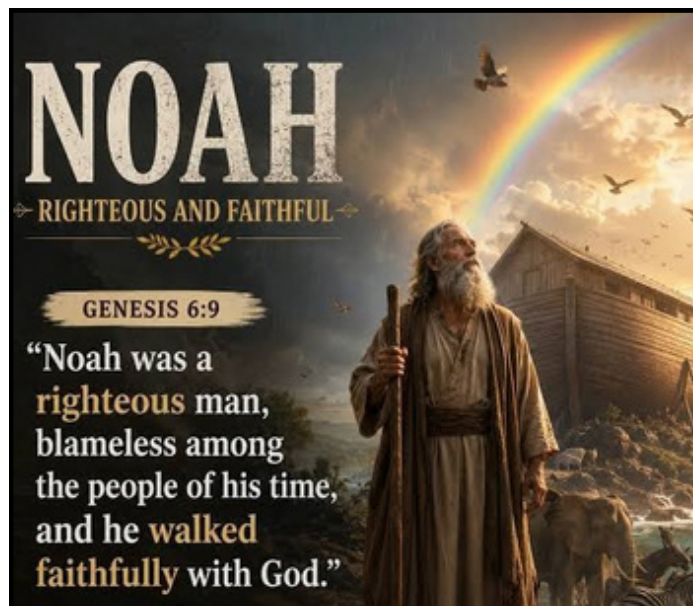
- Invite someone to join your group
- Write thank you notes
- Help someone without being asked
- Give three genuine compliments
- Sit with someone new at lunch



September Virtue – Responsibility

The virtue of responsibility is considered a moral virtue, a stable, habitual disposition of the soul to act in accordance with reason, God's law, and the demands of one's vocation. It is closely linked to the Cardinal Virtue of Justice, which is the constant will to give each person and God what is due.

For September we had the teachers share Noah's story with the students to help them understand the virtue of responsibility.



Noah faithfully obeyed God's instructions, even when others didn't understand. His unwavering faith stands as one of the most powerful examples of long-term obedience in human history. In a deeply corrupt world, he spent roughly 120 years building a massive ark on dry land based solely on God's warning about something that had never been seen before: rain.

Noah's story is a masterclass in responsibility, showing that true accountability is about stewarding a duty even when the weight of it falls entirely on your shoulders.



Service

Student Council had the opportunity to help serve alongside the Knights of Columbus for the annual Tootsie Roll Drive!



8th Grade has been hosting various free will donation service projects to help raise money for their 8th Grade Trip! They started with "Brewin in the name of Jesus" where they gave out coffee on a Monday morning during drop-off!

They served a delicious meal after Mass one morning! The few meals they had leftover they donated to the police department and nursing home!

They are also doing a "Bowl for the Goal" event on Saturday, October 24th. Contact Whitney Hamm (812-230-7658) or Mikayla Beck (618-240-2551) for more information!

Thank you to everyone who has donated!





Saint Mary's
...the Spirit is in the School



Mr. Buss - St. Mary's Principal October 2026 Newsletter

September was an exciting and memorable month at St. Mary's! Our students continued settling into the school year while enjoying many opportunities to lead, learn, celebrate, and grow together. We began by electing our new Student Council members. I am proud of every student who stepped forward and showed a willingness to serve our school. I look forward to seeing the leadership, school spirit, and fresh ideas this group will bring throughout the year. We also celebrated a very successful Picture Day, our first with Madison Laws Photography. Madison and her team did a wonderful job, and we are grateful for the care and energy they brought to capturing the personalities and smiles of our students and staff.

One of the highlights of the month was our incredible Grandparents Day celebration. We were blessed with an amazing turnout as grandparents joined us for Mass, fellowship, classroom visits, lunch, and time with their grandchildren. I especially enjoyed hearing the wisdom and advice our grandparents shared. Their stories, encouragement, and love are such a gift to our students and to the entire St. Mary's community.

Our mornings received an extra boost when athletes from Wabash Valley College joined us for "Fist Bump Friday." The high fives, smiles, and excitement created a fantastic start to the day. We also showed our community spirit on September 25 by celebrating Maroon and Gold Day in honor of Mt. Carmel High School's Homecoming.

September also gave our students some wonderful learning experiences beyond the classroom. Students in first through eighth grade visited WVC's Brubeck Arts Center to enjoy a live bluegrass performance, while our fifth through eighth graders headed outdoors for a canoe trip filled with adventure, teamwork, and plenty of memories.

We were also proud to recognize Wesley Trapp and Evelyn Crummley as our Rockets of the Month. Wesley was honored for the compassion he shows by making sure others feel included, while Evelyn was recognized for her patience, gentleness, and ability to help others work through conflict. Both students represent the kindness, character, and servant leadership we hope to see in every St. Mary's Rocket.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to attend a retreat with fellow principals from across the diocese. It was a meaningful time of reflection, learning, and connection. I returned with renewed energy and several great ideas as we continue looking for ways to grow and improve St. Mary's.

September reminded me once again that a great school is about so much more than what happens inside the classroom. It is built through faith, relationships, service, leadership, new experiences, and the support of an incredible community. Thank you to everyone who helped make this month so special. I cannot wait to see what October brings!

God Bless,

Tyler Buss

Principal



Monthly editions of "The Orbiter" will be posted on Facebook, St. Mary's School website, and copies will be available in the office.

Alumni Information Update Form

Please fill out one form per person, and fill out everything to best of your ability. If you need another form please contact Annie McGrail at amcgrail@smsrockets.net

Full Name: _____

Maiden Name (If married): _____

Address: _____

Birth Date: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

SMS 8th Grade Graduation Year: _____

If you didn't graduate SMS from 8th Grade, what years did you attend:

High School attended and graduation year: _____

School/College (if currently attending): _____

College/University, Degree, and Graduation year: _____

Current Occupation: _____

News you'd like to share with the community: _____
