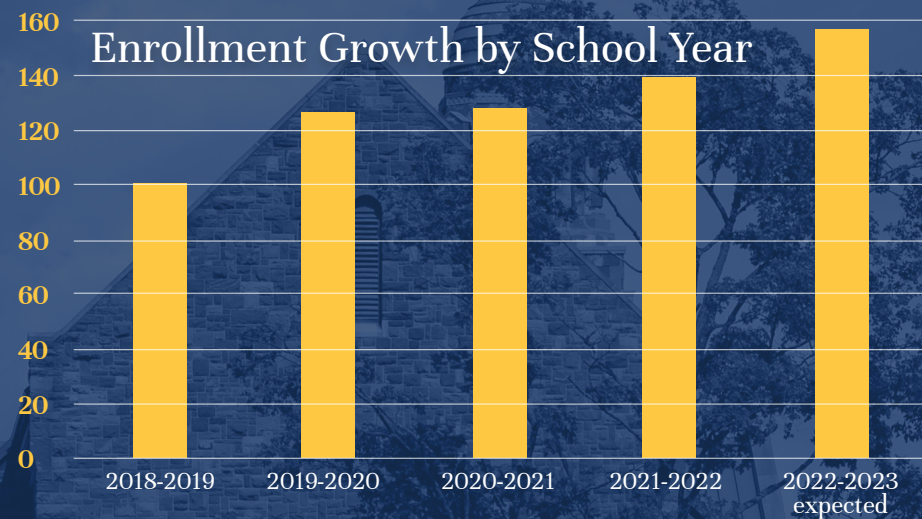


A Joyful Growing School

The FMCA community and parents recognize the importance that our school strives to grow not only a child's academics but their whole being. We strive to cultivate a positive and joyful atmosphere, with family-like relationships for all our families. Our numbers below reflect this. With the average growth rate of private schools in MI at 3-5%, FMCA is almost double that average with 9.4% over the past 4 years.



Photography by
True Presence Photography
www.truepresencephotography.com



Your support of FMCA has helped to provide an engaging music curriculum as seen on the faces of some of our third-grade students pictured here.

Father Marquette Catholic Academy

Newsletter | Spring 2022



A Joyful Catholic, Classical School

By Dr. Jessica Nicole Betz

“My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (John 15:11). A healthy school culture and climate stems from a strong faith, lived out in joy. This is unquestionably the case at Father Marquette Catholic Academy. To live this joy is to be a light to the world.

When you walk in the doors at our school, the faithful culture and climate become apparent and even contagious. The teachers are joyful, and this permeates their teachings; showing all the good, true, and beautiful that is part of the learning experience of a classical, liberal arts curriculum. Our students reflect that joy, and share it with each other, their families, and the community.

We, as a faithful FMCA school family (we consider you part of that family), can share this joy with the world, outside of the FMCA doors. What a wonderful opportunity, especially when we find our world in such disorder. In a special way, we see the fulfillment of this in the baptism of two of our FMCA students this past Easter (see pictures below). Our school is a true blessing to our students, teachers, staff, families and beyond. Thank you for your support and for making it possible for us to grow in our joyful mission each day!



Adalynn (2nd Grade) and Logan (Kindergarten) Bell were baptized at our school Mass on Friday, April 22.



Father Marquette Catholic Academy

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Family Focus: Phil and Lisa Niemi

What are your connections to FMCA?
(Give us some background info)

Both of us grew up downstate Michigan (Grand Rapids and Lansing areas). We were married at St. Joseph parish in Ishpeming and had William a few years later. Living in Ishpeming and attending an Ishpeming Catholic Church, we didn't have a direct connection to FMCA. One of our fellow parishioner families, the Pillifants, sent their three children to Father Marquette school and Melissa is a teacher at FMCA.

Why FMCA?

As Catholic parents of a young child, we were seeking the best educational and spiritually enriching environment for our school-age son. Getting acquainted more with FMCA through friends and the school staff, we quickly learned that FMCA checked off many boxes on our "wish list": intimate class sizes, teachers dedicated to the students, a rigorous academic curriculum, and an atmosphere that fosters knowledge and growth in the Catholic faith. Being 20+ miles from the school has posed some minor challenges over the past 8 years such as having to limit William's participation in school activities occurring in the evenings. However, overall, the benefits have greatly

outweighed the daily forty-mile round trip to FMCA from our home.

Why a Catholic school?

We chose a Catholic school because we desired a learning environment that integrated our Catholic faith into every aspect of the curriculum. We know that being Catholic is not just a Sunday tradition of attending Mass together, but it is a lifestyle that we live out in our families, jobs, and greater communities. We wanted William to have that reinforcement of faith at school to support not only a solid foundation to education but

"We have seen William grow from a shy, young boy to a confident, God-loving, well-rounded young man, and we strongly believe that FMCA has played a major role in this transformation."

to life. In addition, I (Lisa) attended Catholic schools in the greater Grand Rapids area from first grade through high school. I have many wonderful memories from those years and in hindsight have realized that my Catholic education had a significant influence on the person I have



Phil, William and Lisa Niemi

become. I am extremely grateful to my parents for making the sacrifice to send all of us kids (I'm the youngest of 7) to Catholic school. Both of us felt that this was an opportunity that we wanted to give to William as well.

If you could encourage someone to support FMCA financially, what would you tell them?

As parents, we are responsible for bringing up our children in the Catholic faith (as vowed when we received the sacrament of Marriage and when our child received the sacrament of Baptism). There is no better support system in fulfilling this obligation to God than having a loving, faith-filled, learning environment such as FMCA for our child. As community members and members of the Catholic Church, we are called to help others do the same. Supporting FMCA is just one way to help foster the Christian values in the younger generation that will serve them well throughout their entire life.



Joyfully Classical: An Iditarod Adventure in Alaska By Noelle Geary

One unit that seemed to fit in naturally with the classical curriculum for 2nd grade was that of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. This race takes place each year in Alaska as a tribute to the brave men and dog sled teams who made the trek from Anchorage to Nome to carry a much-needed medicine to battle a diphtheria outbreak in 1925. The students studied geography and landforms this year, so what a more beautiful example is there than the state of Alaska for our backdrop? We located Alaska on the world map and each student made a relief map from clay including the cities and trails where the Iditarod runs, carving in rivers, and raising the mountain ranges. After the maps were created, we took time to observe each other's maps and ponder on how they were alike, yet everyone at the same time.

Learning about the Diphtheria outbreak in 1925 that occurred in Nome is a sad truth, but nonetheless, relatable to the virus we are currently facing. We were able to make connections from the past to present in history. Many virtues including perseverance, faithfulness,

kindness, and foresight were shown in getting the precious medicine to Nome, despite the challenges it brought. Math was included since the race route is approximately 1,100 miles and there are many checkpoints along the way. Numerous pieces of literature including *Mush, Akiak - A Tale from the Iditarod*, *Balto*, and *Call of the Wild* were incorporated. The UP 200 made a nice connection to the Iditarod, as many students attended this local race, and this unit takes place in February and March.

Most recently the students used technology to see pictures and research the mushers through reading their biographies. The students each chose a musher. During the weeks of March, the students had a friendly competition to see which of their chosen mushers would finish the race first. We also prayed for all the musher's and dog's safety.

The excitement of this unit spilled over into the rest of the school as it seemed to be a perfect fit for a March is Reading Month school activity. A large map of the state of Alaska and trail was up in



the gym. The students were challenged outside of school during March to collectively read one book for every mile the race covers. Their progress was marked on the trail. As with most challenges, the celebration of victory ended with each class watching an appropriate sled dog movie.

We hope our students saw the good in helping others in need, the true in the history of the race and the beauty in God's creation of the great state of Alaska.



Why have you chosen to support FMCA?

- Committed to the Academy's mission
- Evangelize additional families in the Marquette area
- Best K-8 education in the area.
- Support those families who may be unable to afford tuition to FMCA
- Know that the tuition is a remarkable "deal" for a Catholic education but realizing it doesn't cover all expenses.
- Support the purchasing of technology and materials to advance student learning