NEWS about Our Schools (March 2013)

St. Mary’s School, Oak Ridge

Spirit:
Friday, March 22, at 2:00 and 5:30 P.M., St. Mary's School 8th graders and Young People's Choir presented a prayerful and very moving rendition of the Stations of the Cross to students, families, and parishioners. A highlight of the service came during the 11th Station, Jesus is Nailed to the Cross, when 8th graders Anna Tidwell and Austin Vinyard, portraying the Blessed Mother and Jesus, sang a duet based on Psalm 22 and originally written and scored by Francine Britto and Sister Maria Sarradet, O.P. At the conclusion, all those present were invited to come up to the image of the Face of the Crucified Jesus and place flowers as a sign of reverence. Many thanks to the 8th graders and Young People's Choir, and Sister Mary Rebekah, Kathy Mesmer, Kristin Swabe, and Carolyn Krings for preparing and assisting our students to make this such a prayerful experience for all attending!

Mission:
St. Mary’s School successfully hosted its five-year external review accreditation visit from the AdvancED team from March 3 – 5. St. Mary's has been accredited by AdvancED (formerly Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, SACS-CASI) since 1998, and this year's team included chair Sister Matthew Marie, O.P., a former teacher at St. Mary’s now professor in the school of education, Aquinas College, Nashville; Sister Maria Fidelis, O.P., 2nd grade teacher at Overbrook School, Nashville; Sara Hayes, dean of academics and science instructor at Father Ryan High School, Nashville; and Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler, director of graduate studies in education, Aquinas College.

Among other things, the school was highly commended for its mission, high stakeholder satisfaction, and academic excellence: “The commitment and dedication of the Sisters and the teachers were recognized and appreciated in the strongest of terms among all stakeholders, but the students, without exception, indicated that the teachers are what make St. Mary’s the best school there is. The faculty and staff truly represent what is called for by the Catholic Church in regards to the educational community. Namely, ‘In educational communities, therefore, the style of life has great influence,
especially if the consecrated persons and the lay faithful work together, fully sharing the commitment to develop, in the school, “an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel.” This requires that each one contributes the specific gift of his or her vocation to construct a family supported by charity and by the spirit of the beatitudes. (Educating Together In Catholic Schools #38)”

Service:
On the Solemnity of St. Joseph, March 19, school parent Jennifer McMahan sponsored a St. Joseph’s Altar, and school families donated homemade baked goods and other items that were sold throughout the day, with all proceeds benefitting the parish’s St. Joseph’s Food Pantry. Individual classes and parishioners visited the altar to leave prayer intentions, following a procession and blessing of the altar after Mass by Associate Pastor Fr. Dustin Collins. More than $300 in cash and donated food items were given to the food pantry.