



TO TEACH WHO CHRIST IS

A Newsletter for the Campaign for Parishes, Catholic Education and Faith Formation December 2021

Reflections for the Season

We pray you are all able to enjoy and rejoice in the wonder of this season of Christmas. We invite you to participate in the Archdiocese of Chicago's reflections for the Advent season.

This year, the archdiocesan Office of Lifelong Formation is hosting an Advent Virtual Retreat Series. The Waiting, Together, in Joyful Hope Advent Virtual Retreat Series will walk participants through weekly reflections on accompanying others as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The Office of Lifelong Formation encourages you to step away from the busyness of ministry and pressures of daily life to reflect this Advent and to spend time with God on your own time.

Please visit pvm.archchicago.org/evangelization/advent-resources for the virtual retreat series and more advent resources.



Mother of Six Committed to Bringing Her Children Closer to God Through Catholic School

Raquel Vargas has six children ranging from preschool to high school age, and three of her children currently attend St. Gall School, located at 5515 South Sawyer Avenue in Chicago.



Pictured above are Raquel's husband and their six children.

"I have been very blessed with such a beautiful big family," said Raquel. "A family that I aim to bring closer to God by praying together and trying to live a sacramental life – a life with morals, values and hearts that love and trust God."

Her son Aaron is currently in first grade at St. Gall and a former recipient of the Caritas Scholarship. According to Raquel, attending St. Gall has been the best thing that has happened to him. Aaron is very bright, always eager to learn, and very happy to be enrolled at St. Gall. He loves the environment, his friends and his teachers.

"We are forever grateful to have the opportunity to enroll Aaron at a school like St. Gall," said Raquel. "Since his very first day, my husband

Continued on back

Continued from front

and I have been very happy with the quality of education St. Gall has provided for him. We have seen how teachers and other staff work hand in hand to implement the values and morals that are so important to us.”

Raquel has witnessed multiple staff members commit to create an environment that nourishes students’ independence, but also encourages collaborative spirit. At St. Gall, Raquel’s children are reminded about self-respect and treating others with kindness, and have been taught to love God above all things, which is something Raquel knows they would not learn in public school.

“We have seen a transformation in Aaron,” said Raquel. “He is always the first one at home to volunteer to lead the Rosary, and we continue to observe his growing faith journey and relationship with God. It’s a huge testament to his experience at St. Gall School.”

Both Raquel and her husband have made many sacrifices to ensure their children attend schools that provide a high-level education, but as a family with six kids, it’s a challenge to pay for Catholic education. Angie Lozano, administrative assistant at St. Gall, told Raquel about the Caritas Scholarship, and it’s because of Angie’s suggestion and the donors of the campaign, Aaron was able to continue attending St. Gall.

“Angie always seems to know the needs of families at St. Gall – she is a true angel on earth,” said Raquel. “We greatly appreciate her direction and recommendation, and can’t thank the donors of this campaign enough for their ongoing generosity.”

To learn more about St. Gall School, please visit stgallschool.com.

St. James Church Food Pantry Hosts Annual Christmas Day Reception

Each year, St. James Church Food Pantry, located at 2907 South Wabash Avenue in Chicago, hosts a reception for the homeless on Christmas Day, and this year’s gathering will take place from 12 – 3 p.m. In addition to a hot lunch and gifts, homeless clients get to celebrate Christmas in the company of St. James family and friends.



Due to the pandemic, St. James Food Pantry had to make many adjustments to their annual Christmas reception last year. Pictured above was their 2020 set-up where they graciously gave to-go meals to those in need.

Last year’s reception was very different from years past due to the global pandemic, but the parish was still able to provide meals with their Plates and Presents Program with meals prepared by Polo Café. Instead of an in-person get-together, individuals and families picked up their meals and took them with them.

St. James Food Pantry has been in existence since 1972 when Sr. Carlotta Oberzut, RSM, a teacher in the parish school, formed a food distribution program as a means of assisting needy school families. From that small, but effective start, the food pantry has emerged as one that extends compassionate support to its neighbors, serving on average 1,500 households each month. For many years, St. James Food Pantry has been a beacon of hope for families and individuals living in near-by public housing and the elderly living in several of the Chicago Housing Authority Senior Buildings.

As an active parish in the *To Teach Who Christ Is* campaign, we are very grateful for St. James and the ways they serve the local community and those in need during the Christmas season and throughout the rest of the year. For ways to help the food pantry, please visit stjameswabash.org/ways-to-help.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Overall Campaign Goal: \$350,000,000

Total Raised to Date: \$408,922,491*

Percent of Goal Pledged: 117%

Pledges Paid to Date: \$276,216,710

Percent Paid to Date: 79%

*includes cash, documented pledges and bequests

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



835 North Rush Street, Chicago, IL 60611

tel 312.534.8500

giving.archchicago.org/ttwci



@toteachcampaign



www.facebook.com/toteachcampaign

