

# NEWS & VIEWS

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## GESU STUDENTS VISIT WITH FR. L.

Two of our Gesu eighth graders, Sara Brightman and Liam Cooney, had an opportunity to sit down and chat with Fr. Laniauskas earlier this month. They served as representatives of all the Gesu students and asked him several questions that are in the minds of the school children as they get to know our new pastor. Below are some of the highlights of that personal and enlightening conversation.

### **To start, what are your initial thoughts about Gesu?**

I am very proud of Gesu and am so grateful for all the members that make this community so special. The dedication that I see in our teachers, faculty and staff is incredible! They sacrifice so much to teach you because of their strong faith and commitment to the Church. I'm also very aware of the sacrifice parents and families make to send their children to a Catholic school. I greatly appreciate that commitment. Of course, I am super proud of you the students. You're going to be the leaders of tomorrow. I look at how broken the world is today, but am confident that we are sending amazing students into the world who are ready and willing to make a positive difference.

### **What do you like most and least about serving as pastor at Gesu?**

I most definitely like the people the best. It's such an awesome gift to be able to spend time with people of all ages and from all walks of life. I love to hear people's stories, and I appreciate the richness of them. Visiting the school and being with all of you, the students, is a highlight. It is always so lively there! I also love talking with people after Mass or when they come in to prepare for the sacraments. I have the awesome opportunity to share in people's joyous celebrations, but also to help them and offer comfort through some of their most difficult times.

Sometimes, the administrative pieces of the job are the hardest. That means everything from finances, personnel, CYO sports and the boiler breaking, just to name a few. It can be exhausting!

### **We know that you grew up in the Cleveland area. How did you feel about moving back here to be at Gesu?**

Yes, I grew up in the Cleveland area, primarily Euclid and Mentor, and was part of a strong Lithuanian community. I was pleasantly surprised that the Jesuits sent me back to Cleveland because usually they don't send people back to where they're from. I was so excited to come back to my hometown where much of my family still lives.

### **How long does it take to become a priest, and when did you decide that you wanted to be one?**

It's about twelve years from start to finish to become a Jesuit priest. When I was four years old, I told my mom I was going to be a priest, but I had no idea what it really meant to be a priest then. It wasn't until I was in college that I really decided that I wanted to enter the priesthood. I was studying at Loyola University in Chicago and entered the priesthood after my junior year. During my twelve year formation, I spent time in Lithuania, Chicago, Toledo and Berkeley.

### **What other jobs did you consider before becoming a priest?**

I thought of being a philosophy professor and studied philosophy in college. I also studied psychology and considered being a psychologist or social worker. I always loved helping people, so I knew I wanted to do something that involved working with people and assisting them in some way.

*Continued on page 2*



**Who is your favorite saint? What do you like so much about this person?**

Saint Oscar Romero is my favorite saint. He was very outspoken and loved to preach, which you know I love to do too. Saint Oscar Romero spent time in El Salvador speaking out against poverty and social injustice. Unfortunately, he was assassinated in El Salvador in 1980 while saying Mass. The power of someone standing up for something he believes in and sacrificing his life for that belief is amazing and inspiring to me.

**Speaking of preaching, how do you come up with your homilies for every Mass? How long do you prepare/practice?**

I begin a week before by reading and reflecting on all the readings for that day a few times, and I ask the Holy Spirit for inspiration. Next, I write an outline of what I want to say. By Friday, I have written out my entire sermon and read it over about twenty times, so that I don't need to bring it with me on Sunday. It's powerful to preach to folks. I don't think my homilies are ever totally spontaneous, but occasionally I need to make adjustments depending on the day, the congregation and the mood I am in. With the kids at school liturgies, I have no idea what they're going to say, so I try to connect their comments with my ideas. No two Masses are the same – ever. Most of the time there is a parallel and my sermons have the same structure; but there have been times when I'll preach something at the 8 o'clock Mass, and I completely change it for the Mass right after.



**Did you have any pets growing up? If so, tell us about them.**

We had a dog for a week. My siblings and I always wanted a dog, so we made a presentation for our parents as to why we should get one. My mom finally buckled. My sister was terrified of the dog and wouldn't eat at the kitchen table with us. After just two days, the dog jumped on the counter and ate all the food that was prepared for dinner, so my mom returned the dog to the breeder. Then, I got a hamster out of the experience because I was so distraught about the dog. I also had snakes and six or seven fish tanks over the years.

**What do you like to do in your spare time (now or as a child)?**

I love to listen to all kinds of music, and I pray to music a lot. I'm not a huge fan of rap music, like I know some of you are, but there are some rappers with good thoughts and ideas that I appreciate. My number one activity, of course, is fishing. I love to fish and am a big fisherman. Also, I really enjoy nature and outdoor activities such as skiing and hiking. I really love bugs and actually used to collect them when I was young. My favorite bug by far is the dragonfly. I was on an eight-day silent retreat in California many years ago, and I saw a very rare red dragonfly. I chased it all around the property trying to catch it, but it flew into the woods. At the end of the retreat, I was walking along a stream on the property and praying to Jesus, telling Him how much I was going to miss Him. At that moment, the dragonfly landed right on my shoulder and I felt Jesus so close to me. I put my hand out and it even flew to it. I couldn't believe it! Hence, my obsession with dragonflies.

**What is your favorite Bible story?**

I would probably say my favorite story is when Jesus makes breakfast for the disciples. This is after Jesus rises from the dead and the disciples are fishing one morning. When a man calls to them from the shore to ask if they've caught anything, they reply no. The man suggests they throw the nets to the other side of the boat where, of course, they catch a lot of fish. Peter later realizes that this man is Jesus and when the disciples return to shore with a boat full of fish, they find Jesus making breakfast for them on the beach.

**What is one place you have not been that you would like to visit? Why?**

I'd like to visit Alaska, I think, or Patagonia, predominantly because of the wildlife. As I said before, I love nature and animals. Plus, I love the cold. People in the parish sometimes make jokes because they have seen me wearing shorts in the winter.

**If Jesus was actually here with us in person on Earth, do you think the world would be different?**

I hope so. I would really hope so. There are many terrible things happening in our world today, and it breaks our hearts. When Jesus was alive on Earth, there were some of those same difficult situations, unfortunately. There were people who rejected Jesus and gave Him a hard time, but also many who accepted Him and loved Him. He never gave up on people and loved all people. I try every weekend at Mass to demonstrate that Jesus is still here with us on Earth. I hope and pray that people and families meet Him with me on Sunday, and bring Him home to be with them throughout the week.

## STUDENTS UNEARTH THE VALUE OF HANDS-ON LEARNING

By Katelyn Seliskar, Assistant Principal

There is no question that students learn best when they are actively engaged. Archeology Day this fall was an excellent example of what students can accomplish with hands-on activities across multiple subjects. This past September, students in fourth grade learned from a variety of guest speakers, scientists and volunteers and had opportunities to make connections between science, art, music and social studies.

During this on-campus field trip, students moved through different stations, which provided unique activities for students to engage in the practice of archeology and to learn about Native American culture. Robin Pease from Kulture Kids shared elements from her own Mohawk ancestry, including languages, food, dance and meanings behind glyphs and symbols. Archaeologist Mark Kollercker demonstrated how indigenous people would make arrowheads out of flint. He also shared how other tools would have been used as well, including those made of obsidian glass and flint. Students learned how to use atlatls, or throwing spears, from Jim Bowers and Nancy Howell of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. For an art project, students learned different beading methods. At another station, students learned about different foods that indigenous peoples grew and ate including, corn, beans and squash.



For many students, the most exciting experience was an archaeological dig. In addition to learning how to use different tools, Beth Hoag, a professor of archeology at the Cleveland Institute of Art, led the students through the process of how to categorize real artifacts from archeological digs. Many of these artifacts were thousands of years old, including pottery shards from the Southwest and from Ohio.

All who participated in Archeology Day with the fourth grade witnessed learning in action. Experiences like these help to instill values of lifelong learning in students. The fourth graders and the fourth grade team are incredibly grateful to all volunteers who helped to make this day incredibly special.

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## Gesu Summer Camps!

### Spotlight Discovery Camp "Nature Rocks!"

June 6-10, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm  
Students entering grades 1-5

### History Camp

Week of June 27

### Archaeological Dig

Week of July 11th

### Tech Camp 2022

August 1-5, 8:45 am - 12:00 pm  
Students entering grades 3-8



## Vacation Bible School

June 13-17, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Students in Pre-K - Grade 4

This year's theme will be Great Big Beautiful World, which has its foundation in Pope Francis' Encyclical, Laudato Si! We will explore God's creation through Bible stories, music, crafts, activities and more.

If you would like to volunteer or would like more information, please contact Mary O'Neill by calling (216) 932-0617 x119, or by emailing [moneill@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:moneill@churchofthegesu.org).



Visit [gesu.com](http://gesu.com) for more information.



I also loved education. Friends told me that I'd be a great teacher, and the thought of that really excited me.

After graduating from Ohio State with a degree in Journalism, I simultaneously took an intensive one-year Master's Program of education classes at Ursuline College and did student teaching. In my very first education class at Ursuline, I thought: "This is me!" Teaching was exciting. I was really intrigued by the methodology behind teaching.

My student teaching was at Lakewood High School and Agnon School in Beachwood. My first paid teaching job was at Ledgemont School in Geauga County. I taught there for five years. When I heard about an opening at Gesu, I sent

By John Betchkal

It feels like Regan Kazel was destined to be the Principal of Gesu Catholic School.

The enthusiastic principal is smart, energetic, confident and fully focused on the school's 725 students, Preschool through Grade 8. Her path from Parma Hospital, where she was born, to Gesu has been highlighted with joy gained in learning and sharing teaching skills. Mrs. Kazel reflects on some of those memorable moments along the way, along with her thoughts about the future of Gesu Catholic School.

**N&V: Let's start by asking about your youthful years.**

**RK:** I was raised in Parma. My mom and dad lived in the same house for 47 years. They just left it this past January. They wanted to have a family, so they adopted a son from Catholic Charities when he was six weeks old. Lo and behold, a year later my mom became pregnant with me. That was great for all of us. My brother Daren and I are – and always have been – very close.

I went to St. Leo Elementary School, where my mom was secretary to the Religious Ed director. I attended Magnificat High School for two years, and then I transferred to Holy Name, where I played soccer.

**N&V: Where did you attend college?**

**RK:** I went to John Carroll for my first year. But in my sophomore year I transferred to Ohio State as a journalism major. I enjoyed writing. While I was there, I wrote for the Lantern, which has an impressive history and circulation. But

in my application. Sr. Linda Martin was then the principal. When I called to check on my application she answered the phone and encouraged me to come for an interview. It went well, and I was hired to teach Gifted Enrichment classes for Grades K-8. That was in 2010.

I also got involved in almost every extracurricular activity that I could at Gesu. I coached soccer, was involved with The Problem Solvers and helped start the school newspaper. That was fun – a journalism major from OSU starting an elementary school newspaper!

Sr. Linda has always been supportive of me. Several years after I came to Gesu she asked me if I might be interested in School Administration. When I said yes, she helped me enroll in a Diocesan-sponsored master's program at Notre Dame College for Administration and Education Leadership candidates. Completing that program gave me the credentials to be a principal.

**N&V: When did you become Principal?**

**RK:** I became principal in July of 2021. Before that I was Assistant Principal for three years. When Lucy Iemmelo retired, I was interviewed by a committee reviewing candidates for Principal. I must have done well in those interviews because one day, when I was driving home from school, Fr. Kiser called and offered me the job. I excitedly said yes, and he asked me if I should talk with my husband, Jamie, before I took the job. He was always so very caring.

In the selection process Fr. Laniauskas called me from Ireland by Zoom. As we talked about the principal's role he

said: “Let’s dream big!” Hearing that was very exciting. I just thought “yes, yes, yes!”

**N&V:** Now that you’re the principal, what do you see in Gesu School’s future?

**RK:** There are no parameters! I see Gesu as being cutting edge. We have the motivation and are working on getting the means. Last month at our annual fund-raiser we raised over \$140,000. That money will go for enhancing our security system in the building and modernizing our first-floor bathrooms and the nurse’s station.

We are focused on the future. We know that high tech electronics has changed education. Children don’t even think about going to the library to get answers to questions. The answers are at their fingertips. Our role is to teach our students how to be problem solvers. We want to help them be hands-on critical thinkers. Doing that is stimulating for both the students and the teachers!

Our school’s strengths are its inclusiveness among both students and faculty. We have a Catholic school that is inclusive. And the emphasis we place on project-based learning is a major strength. Gesu has a strong faculty of very dedicated teachers – and all of us know that God is the One who has created our learning environment. God is it. He is guiding us through every day. When our students graduate, they know that God exists, and that God unequivocally loves each of them and all of us.



**N&V:** We’ve talked about the Gesu School family. Please tell us about your family.

**RK:** Jamie and I have a son and a daughter. James is three and one half. Summer is 10 months old. My parents are wonderful about helping at our house – there’s no place they’d rather be than with James and Summer. I am so grateful for that. It

makes the children and me very happy.

I don’t have too much free time these days, but when I can, I enjoy running and reading. We live in Chesterland, and there are some good spots for running there. Three miles is nice easy, fun run for me. When it comes to reading, “To Kill a Mockingbird” has just blown me away. It is my all-time favorite novel. It has so much depth. For years I taught it to Gesu eighth graders, and I believe they learned much from our class discussions.

**N&V:** One more topic – tell us about your relationship to Sr. Dorothy Kazel, the martyred Ursuline Sister.

**RK:** I was born in 1980, the year that she was murdered. She was my husband Jamie’s aunt. We treasure having the Bible she read while she was in El Salvador. The words are printed in Spanish. She had writings in it. Years ago, she gave the Bible to a person fleeing El Salvador to carry during the perilous journey to Freedom. After Sr. Dorothy’s assassination, that person searched out my mother-in-law and father-in-law and gave them the Bible as a remembrance of my husband’s aunt. She told them to read that Bible in Sr. Dorothy’s honor. We are so blessed to have the Bible in our home. We pray for Sr. Dorothy, and we know she prays for us.



*The Kazel family at home: James (3 1/2), Regan, Summer (10 months), and Jamie, enjoying togetherness.*

## LEGACY FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

By Colleen Clemens, Development Assistant

As Gesu prepares for its 100th anniversary, we can be grateful for the many remarkable families whose members have helped shape our parish and school's history. One such family with a long, strong history at Gesu is the Sullivan-Power family.

Their legacy began when Frank and Mary Sullivan moved into the second house built on Hadleigh Road in University Heights. They had five children – Bill, Joe, Tom, Molly (Power) and Mike, who attended Gesu from 1937-1952. Mike remembers Father Grace who would spend time with the children on the playground during the school day. He was amazed at how Father could kick a football farther than anyone while in his cassock. Molly recalls participating in the May Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary as an eighth grader in 1950. She remembers sharing the experience with fellow classmates, Mary Jo Vince Rourke, Nancy Graf, and Mary Kate Madigan (Sister Mercia, OSU), some who have stayed closely connected and involved in the parish.

The Sullivans moved to Columbus when most of the kids were in high school, but the children could not stay away from the area for long. The boys all attended John Carroll University and maintained close ties to the Gesu community. Joe settled in Cleveland and his kids attended PSR classes at Gesu. Joe's grandchildren – Lila, Claire, Peter and Ian McKenna – attended Gesu in the 1990's and early 2000's.

Molly Sullivan married John Power in 1960 and began their life together in Youngstown, where John was raised. They moved six times across the country while raising their five children. John's career with Automatic Sprinkler Corporation brought them back to Cleveland in 1973, and Molly was thrilled to return to the Heights area to be close to family and friends, many of whom were Gesu classmates. Molly says that the decision to live in Gesu Parish was easy since she grew up in University Heights and wanted her children to attend Gesu Catholic School.



John and Molly Power, with their children and grandchildren.

Molly and John's children include Mary '75, Ann '76, John '78, Joan '80, and Katie '84. They attended Gesu from 1973-1984. Mary was 12 when she entered Gesu in Grade 7. Three of the five Power children have settled in Cleveland and have continued the family legacy at Gesu by sending their own kids to the school, with graduating classes ranging from 2010-2020. Molly believes that a Catholic education helps young people develop a strong sense of spirituality and values. She states, "An excellent Catholic school embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values and committed to faith formation and service. Students gain a strong understanding of the sacraments and enjoy celebrating several of them with their classmates." Molly's grandson, Danny Cook, adds, "The path for me from Gesu to St. Ignatius taught me the importance of serving others and to always walk in faith."

As members of Gesu Parish, Molly and John enjoyed being involved in the many clubs and activities offered in the parish and school. In fact, they were one of the founding couples of the Gesu Turk-A-Tron, which has recently returned as a popular school fundraiser. When Mary was in eighth grade and the school offered mini-courses in the Spring as a special activity for the eighth grade students, Molly taught the golf session with her friend, Marilyn O'Neill. As grandparents, Molly and John enjoyed being invited to school as "mystery readers" in their grandchildren's classes, and they attended numerous sporting events, concerts, awards ceremonies and Friday morning school Masses. Many of their volunteer activities and traditions have been shared with their grandchildren such as the Pancake Breakfast, Gesu Picnic/Block Party and the Gesu Food Drive. Many members of the family have served at St. Pat's Hunger Center and participated in Gesu's Honduras Mission.

Molly is proud to say that all three generations of the Sullivan-Power family have embraced the significance of giving back and serving members in the extended community, an important focus of a Catholic education at Gesu. She believes the school does a great job of attracting young families and providing an excellent education. Molly feels the parish has been blessed with many wonderful priests, nuns, teachers, and administrators over the years. In fact, she remains close with Mary Jo Rourke, a former 5th grade teacher. Molly shares, "Almost every time I am out with Mary Jo, who taught at Gesu for 28 years, a former student approaches her to say how she was one of their favorite teachers." She adds, "I'm so grateful to have lifelong friends who I met early on while attending Gesu Catholic School and later through being a parent and parishioner. One of the best things about being part of Gesu is that you'll have multi-generational friendships that will last a lifetime."

In our next issue of *News & Views*, we will be featuring the Thoma-Carney family, a four-generation legacy family that has been steadily involved at Gesu for almost 100 years!

If you would like *your* legacy family to be featured in an upcoming issue, please reach out to us! Contact Mary Kate Farrar at (216) 932-0617 or [mkfarrar@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:mkfarrar@churchofthegesu.org).



## 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE HOMELESS HOOKUP

By Katelyn Seliskar, Assistant Principal

During the months of November and December, eighth graders at Gesu were engaged in service-learning, the intersection of high academic achievement and service to others. Students used research skills to design an informational brochure about homelessness and designed a service project to help those in this unfortunate situation. All activities were related to the essential question, “what responsibilities do the government entities and private citizens have in combating and remedying homelessness in the United States?”

“In addition to academic rigor, a central tenet to a Gesu education is service to others.”

This multidisciplinary learning experience combined elements of social studies, mathematics, English language arts, and religion. Students researched current events, read and analyzed non-fiction texts, represented data and statistics graphically, and presented their findings in both written and verbal forms. The project culminated in a Socratic Seminar, or student-led discussion, in which classmates strove to answer questions related to the depth of child poverty in America.

In addition to academic rigor, a central tenet to a Gesu education is service to others. In addition to their informational brochure and Socratic Seminar, eighth grade students organized the school-wide Advent Service Project. Each group of students was assigned a homeroom where they advertised the project, collected donated items, and then assembled survival kits. At the end of December, these kits were presented to Dean Roff, founder of Homeless Hookup, a local non-profit organization dedicated to helping those in Cleveland affected by poverty and homelessness. Throughout the project, eighth grade teachers praised their students for their leadership, creativity and critical thinking. This service-learning project not only gave students the tools to better understand a complicated issue like homelessness, but it also allowed them to experience the beauty of service to others by embodying God’s love.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know we have so many teachers + staff (both school + parish) who are alumni of Gesu? We are so lucky to have them back at Gesu!

**Katie Barrett - 2006**  
3rd Grade Teacher

**Therese Blumenthal - 1978**  
Parish Staff

**Margaret Casey - 2003**  
1st Grade Teacher

**Joe Ciuni - 1999**  
Preschool Teacher

**Shelly Clary - 1998**  
STREAM Director

**Colleen Clemens - 1984**  
Parish Staff

**Megan Curran - 2006**  
Preschool

**Kelly DiFranco - 2007**  
2nd Grade Teacher

**Mary Kate Farrar - 1989**  
Parish Staff

**Clare Hogan - 2004**  
Jr. High Social Studies Teacher

**Nate Luengo - 2003**  
8th Grade ELA Teacher

**Rosemary Nemeth - 1974**  
4th Grade Teacher

**Jenna Norcia - 2007**  
Intensive Learning Teacher

**Katie Parisi - 1991**  
Kindergarten Teacher

**Maureen Parnin Sizemore - 1982**  
Health Assistant

**Mary Roscoe - 1980**  
Parish Staff

## BR. SEAN BARRY ACCOMPANIES GESU YOUTH ON THEIR JOURNEYS OF FAITH

I can hardly believe that I have been at the Church of the Gesu since August. The time has moved quickly, and a large part of that is how much I have enjoyed the work I am involved in and the community here at the parish and the school. I am blessed with a number of opportunities to make an impact, particularly with our youth.

For half of the week, I have many parish responsibilities. Among these are writing monthly articles for the bulletin, visiting parishioners to bring them Holy Communion, serving at Masses, and going to the gravesite to offer final prayers after a funeral Mass. I also have the opportunity to co-teach a PSR class at the seventh and eighth grade levels on Sundays. All of these are wonderful opportunities to share my faith with others and to journey alongside the people of this community.

Three days a week, I help out in the school. Over the course of a day, I serve as an aide in five different classrooms in the middle school: English, math, social studies, science and theology. In addition, I am also a lunchroom monitor during all of the lunch periods. Needless to say, I have the opportunity to get to know our students fairly well, and I absolutely love the opportunity to engage with them.

Before I came to University Heights, I taught math and theology at University of Detroit Jesuit High School. While there, I learned that there is something special about the daily interactions that being in a classroom affords. In small, everyday ways, we get to know the students and build relationships with them.

One of the most apparent places I experience those relationships at Gesu is in my time as a lunchroom monitor. Each grade level has its own unique character that keeps the work interesting. Some students want to ask me dozens of questions, ranging from simple things like what my favorite color is, to more complex questions about what it means for me to be a Jesuit brother. Others beg me for riddles or want to tell me all about their day or their families and friends. It is heartwarming to be welcomed into the lives of these students.



This past fall, the eighth grade had a project-based learning experience focusing on homelessness, and I volunteered to offer a reflection on some of my own experiences with homelessness. During my Novice Pilgrimage (as part of my Jesuit formation) I had the opportunity to work with the school's Labre Ministry program to provide food, clothing and conversation to the homeless population downtown. I shared with the students the real need to recognize the dignity of the people we encounter, stating how I often failed to experience that during my Novice Pilgrimage. I reminded the students of the first creation story in Genesis. God created humanity in the divine image. That makes us all brothers and sisters – all tied together – and so we are called to care for and about one another. I was amazed by the inquisitiveness and thoughtfulness displayed by the students, demonstrating their hunger for a deeper engagement with their faith, asking good and thoughtful questions. And I was left wondering, "How am I able to help our students grow spiritually?"

When I teach my PSR class, one of my strategies to get students engaged is to tell stories. Sometimes these stories seem to have nothing to do with faith, but instead serve the purpose of making me more relatable to the students, sharing a moment from my life with which they might connect. At other points, they are explicitly faith-related, like when I told students about the opportunity I had to be present when someone received the Anointing of the Sick.

Another strategy I employ comes from my time with the altar servers. During my time here, I've helped to train (or retrain) a number of our servers for weekend Masses and school Masses. We have gone over the procedure of how to serve at Mass, modeling for some and instructing others more directly. This approach is even more important with funeral Masses. I have helped a number of servers through their first funerals, and the new rhythm is jarring for some. The servers learn and grow through experience, aware that they do not go through this process alone and that they can find answers to their questions. I often find myself proud of these young people and enjoy passing on the torch of service and (hopefully) helping to empower them to be involved more fully in their faith.

Most weeks, I try to pop over to the chess club on Tuesday afternoons, and I don't go to improve my game, or learn or teach new strategies. I go to engage with the students in a different way. There, I am a fellow chess player, not a teacher or monitor. The time spent with students in this way creates the space for a later and more personal interaction, a lesson I learned well when I helped coach cross country in Detroit.

One theme is common to all of these stories and approaches, and it is tied to the reason I am a Jesuit and why I enjoy this life as much as I do: accompaniment. One of my greatest joys of teaching, regardless of the grade level or context, is getting to walk with others and share a little of what I am passionate about and what is important to me, while also listening to what others are saying. This is how we help others to grow in their faith. My time here has been a gift, and it has been so fruitful because I have been able to share in relationship with so many good people in the parish and in the school. Thank you for helping to make this community what it is. May God bless you abundantly.



## GESU DREAMS COME TRUE!

By Michael Martinek, Technology Director and Drama Club Moderator



After two years, the Drama Club returned to Gesu Catholic School! The club is open to students in grades four through eight. This year, fifty-five students participated as actors, actresses, singers, dancers and technical crew in the spring production of *If You Can Dream...A Gesu Celebration of Disney Magic*, with performances held at Gilmour's Center for the Performing Arts.

With the cancellation of our production of *The Little Mermaid* in 2020, and a year off due to the pandemic, we had been dreaming of being able to perform as a live theater again. To achieve this goal, we had designed this year's show with flexibility at its core. This started with our creative team writing the show to ensure it met the necessities of our cast. We also simplified the costumes and sets to allow for a lower budget production.

Our show featured 18 songs from beloved Disney classics such as *Tarzan*, *Mulan*, *Disney Fireworks Show*, *Pinocchio* and many others. Our show featured a tale as old as time; two sisters discover magic in their attic only to find themselves transported into various Disney worlds. With their guide, Jiminy Cricket, the sisters team up with other Disney characters to defeat the Evil Sorceress and her faithful minion, Bruno. Throughout the show, students put on stunning performances of classics such as "I'll Put a Spell on You" from *Hocus Pocus*, "Be Prepared" from *The Lion King*, "I'll Make a Man Out of You" from *Mulan* and "When You Wish Upon a Star" from *Pinocchio*.

This year, our creative team, composed of seven staff members, was led by our director and choreographer, Aubrey Fink. Fink was tasked with the script production and was responsible for helping the show to be the best possible. Regarding the arrangement of music and tracks for our production, we were blessed to have help from Matt Croft. Currently, Croft is serving as the Associate Music Director and keyboard player on the national tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. As the tour was in Cleveland this past February, Croft was able to generously dedicate time to our production. For vocal rehearsals, we had our own music teacher, Lance Hahn, lead the instruction of voice parts to our students. Serving as our director's assistant, we had Gesu alumnae Lauren Dimenna, who also provided support with choreography. We also had the help of

school staff members, Courtney Dimenna and Angela Aquila, who assisted with coordinating various behind the scenes support such as tickets, advertising, student supervision, costumes, props and much more.

Looking toward the future, we foresee transitioning the Drama Club back to doing a complete full production. Currently, we are unable to provide exact details regarding next year's production, but we are looking into changing performance venues to somewhere a little closer, as there is no place like home. Thank you, sincerely, for your support of our Drama Club. It is through the support we have received that we are able to continue bringing quality theater to our community. We hope to have your continued support and look forward to seeing you at our future productions.

*Check out the Gesu Catholic School Social Media accounts for clips and additional pictures from the show.*

ATTENTION   
ALL ALUMNI FROM  
1970, 1971, 1972 & 1973

REUNION

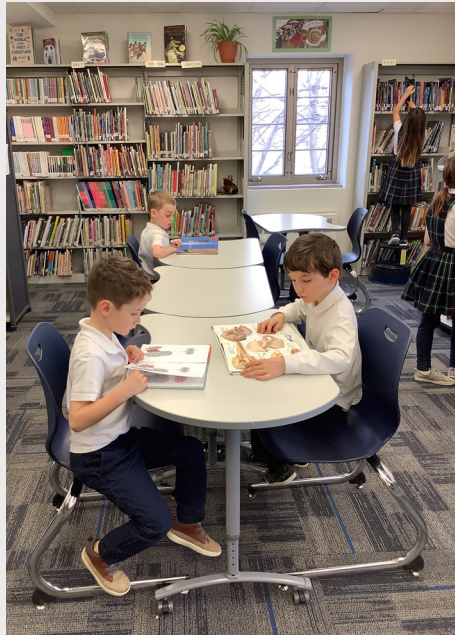
*The class of 1971 is enthusiastically planning a belated 50th reunion for June of 2023. If you are interested in a reunion for your class, please contact Dennis Coyne so that efforts can be coordinated.*

**Dennis M. Coyne Co. LPA**  
**denniscoyne@yahoo.com**  
**Phone: 216-781-9162**

## SCHOOL RENOVATIONS ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

By Mary Kate Farrar, Director of Development & Communications

Over the past five years, due to the generosity of so many families and foundations, Gesu Catholic School has been updating and renovating many parts of the school building and grounds. The main classroom areas were built in 1940 and 1962. Our parish has done an outstanding job maintaining these spaces for the generations of Gesu students



who have used them over the decades. However, as Gesu continues moving forward with student-directed learning and emphasis on 21st century skills, our physical spaces need to continue to move forward as well. This requires flexibility of furniture and technology conducive for both collaborative learning and independent study, as well as spaces that inspire our students and foster creativity. As we make enhancements in the school, interactive boards and white boards will replace classic blackboards, and furniture that can easily be maneuvered to accommodate different learning experiences will replace rows of desks. A concerted effort has been made to refresh and enhance Gesu Catholic School facilities, including the library, classrooms and outdoor space. Gesu is so grateful for the generosity and engagement of school families, parishioners, alumni and friends who have supported our efforts and made these updates possible. A special thank you to the committee members and leadership



of the Annual Mardi Gras Fundraiser. Over the past four years, they have helped raise a total of \$275,000 toward the renovations.

### STREAM Center

In 2017 the former Religious Education Center was rededicated and remodeled into a space with classrooms for enhanced classroom learning in the STREAM curriculum. The chapel was updated for a prayer

and reflection area for students and catechists and includes a library of resources to support religious education opportunities. The lower level Art Studio and community room were freshened up with new paint, lighting, furniture and fixtures.

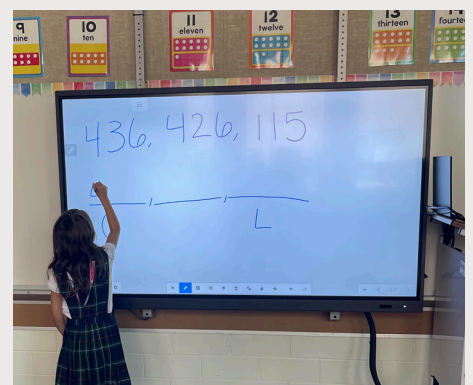
### Learning Commons

Our former library was an active place! With over 13,500 books and periodicals, all students and teachers used it throughout the school day, and even after school. However, the shelves were from the 1970's when the library was in the basement of the building and needed to be replaced. In 2018 Gesu's library went through a renovation and was transformed into today's Learning Commons. The space reflects Gesu's project-based learning approach. New versatility of the modular tables and chairs allows students to work in groups, collaborate with one another and perform research.



### Classroom Updates

Many of our classrooms were in need of capital improvements. In 2019 and 2020, Gesu refreshed several classrooms with new paint, flooring, desks, furnishings, tack boards and whiteboards to complement our 21st century student-directed learning.



### Bulldog Gym

In 2021, the original Gesu gym (now known as the Bulldog Gym) was updated. The renovations included paint and new wall padding. These changes have brightened this popular area of the school.

**Preschool Classroom**

The lower level of Gesu Catholic School is home to our youngest students. In the summer of 2021 the 4-year-old preschool classroom received some much needed cosmetic attention, including new flooring, updated lighting, fresh paint and new furnishings.

**Preschool Playground**

In 2021, the old play structure on the Preschool Playground was removed and was replaced by new modern equipment. It is a popular place for our little ones, who are thrilled that they have safe, structurally sound equipment on which to grow, play and explore.

**What's on the horizon?**

This summer Gesu plans to begin renovations on the new school entranceway and main office, the third floor, first floor restrooms, and the 3-year-old/Pre-K classroom. Stay tuned for the updates.



## GESU SCHOLARSHIPS OFFER TUITION ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

Gesu Parish is very proud of the numerous ministries and programs it has to offer. One of the most important and rewarding ministries is Gesu Catholic School. Each member of the Gesu administration, faculty and staff is committed to providing over 725 students with an excellent Catholic education. They seek to help the students build a strong Catholic foundation, rooted in the Jesuit tradition, by guiding them in their understanding of the Catholic faith and its traditions and encouraging them to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

While the Gesu administration understands that school tuition is a financial commitment, the administration also believes in the importance of making a Catholic education available to all families. Gesu strives to strike a balance between affordability for families and the strategic needs of the school. With that in mind, there are several scholarship and financial aid programs available to assist families in need and to help make the financial commitment more manageable.

**Fr. Francis T. Dietz, SJ Scholarship Endowment Fund**

The Fr. Francis T. Dietz, SJ Scholarship was established in 1979 by several Gesu families in honor of a beloved priest and pastor who served the Gesu Community for many years. The scholarship fund offers financial assistance for Catholic School education to Gesu parishioners enrolled in seventh or eighth grades at Gesu Catholic School or those attending a Catholic High School in the area. To be eligible for this scholarship, students must desire a Catholic education, apply themselves academically to the best of their ability, and abide by the school's scholastic and moral principles. During the 2021-2022 school year, the Fr. Dietz Scholarship was awarded to 25 Gesu Catholic School and Catholic high school students.

**Fr. Robert J. McAuley, SJ Scholarship Endowment Fund**

The Fr. Robert J. McAuley Scholarship was established in 1994 in honor of a dedicated and inspiring priest who served as pastor of Gesu from 1985-1993. This scholarship fund offers financial assistance to Gesu parishioners who have children attending Gesu Catholic School in grades kindergarten through six. To be eligible for this scholarship, students must apply themselves to the best of their ability in regard to Gesu's scholastic and moral principles.

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During the 2021-2022 school year, the Fr. McAuley Scholarship was awarded to 56 students.

**The Mary Carol Jones Scholarship Fund**

The Mary Carol Jones Scholarship was established in May 2021 to pay tribute to a wonderful, selfless woman who has given her time, energy, guidance and leadership to so many students and families in the Gesu Community for over fifty years! Mary Carol attended Gesu as a child and returned to Gesu as an adult to serve as a teacher, administrator, mentor, leader and friend. This scholarship was established by members of Mary Carol's family and continues to be supported by people who have come to know and love Mary Carol over the years. This scholarship is available to students and families who are committed to being part of the Gesu Community and fulfilling the school's mission. In the fall of 2021, the Mary Carol Jones Scholarship was awarded to four students.

**The Gesu Financial Assistance Program**

The Parish Financial Aid program provides scholarships to Gesu Catholic School students in kindergarten through eighth grade who demonstrate financial need. Funding for this assistance comes from the Gesu Financial Aid Fund, as well as Parish funds.

**Annual Giving Fund**

The Gesu Catholic School Annual Giving Program provides year-round unrestricted support to the school and students. Gifts to the fund allow students to continue to have positive educational experiences, celebrate liturgies at Mass, and practice good sportsmanship on and off the fields. We encourage alumni and families to "pay it forward" by supporting the Gesu Catholic School's Annual Giving Program.

We are extremely grateful to parishioners, alumni, families and friends who continue to grow the scholarship and financial assistance programs at Gesu Catholic School. All gifts to these funds are fully tax deductible. To learn more about the Annual Giving Program and Gesu Scholarship Programs, please contact Mary Kate Farrar at [mkfarrar@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:mkfarrar@churchofthegesu.org) or (216) 932-0617.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Gesu Parish, a Catholic community in the Jesuit tradition, is committed to:  
Eucharistic living, Lifelong learning, Generous serving “all for the greater glory of God.”



## *Holy Week & Easter Schedule*

### APRIL 10 - APRIL 17

<b>Palm Sunday - April 10</b> Vigil Mass: 4:30 pm Saturday Sunday Masses: 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:30 am Taizé Prayer: 7:00 pm, Marian Chapel	<b>Holy Thursday, April 14</b> Morning Prayer: 9:00 am, Marian Chapel Mass of the Lord's Supper: 7:00 pm, Church
<b>Monday, April 11</b> Masses: 7:30 am, 8:30 am	<b>Good Friday, April 15</b> Morning Prayer, 9:00 am, Marian Chapel Good Friday Service: 3:00 pm, Church Stations of the Cross: 7:00 pm, Church
<b>Tuesday, April 12</b> Mass: 7:30 am	<b>Holy Saturday, April 16</b> Morning Prayer: 9:00 am, Marian Chapel Blessing of Easter Food: 12:00 pm, Marian Chapel Easter Vigil Mass: 8:30 pm, Church
<b>Wednesday, April 13</b> Masses: 7:30 am, 8:30 am Tenebrae: 7:00 pm, Marian Chapel	<b>Easter Sunday, April 17</b> Masses: 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:30 am

## PARISH AND SCHOOL STAFF

Rev. Lukas M. Laniauskas, SJ, Pastor  
Rev. Michael Vincent, SJ, Associate Pastor  
Rev. Gregory Hyde, SJ, Priest in Residence  
Br. Sean Barry, SJ, Brother in Residence  
Rev. Dr. James O'Donnell, Deacon  
Sr. Kathleen Flannery, OSU, Parish Life Director & Liturgist  
Marcia Leous, Director of Faith Formation for Adults  
Mary O'Neill, Director of Faith Formation for Children & Families  
Mark Ehrbar, Director of Music Ministry

Therese Blumenthal, Business Manager  
Mary Kate Farrar, Development & Communications Director  
Brittany Lynch, Communications Coordinator  
Amy Zucca, Outreach Coordinator  
Regan Kazel, Principal  
Katelyn Seliskar, Assistant Principal  
Debbie Lautenbach, Preschool Director  
Matthew Culkar, Athletic Director  
Michael Martinek, Technology Director

## VOLUNTEER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Gesu Communication Committee

Printing courtesy of LPi. Mailing courtesy of Magic Marketing and Graphics, Inc.

All efforts have been made to provide accurate information. Please contact us for corrections.