



Saint Maria Goretti

Est. 1954

Catholic School

November 9, 2020

Dear SMGCS Families,

Today we met (virtually via Google Meets) for our November Faith Families assembly! Our focus this month is the virtue of *Courtesy*.

In our whole group virtual session, we learned the meaning of courtesy – being thoughtful to others; other words for courtesy, such as *respectful, well-mannered, polite, thoughtful, and considerate*; ways we can practice the virtue of courtesy in our own lives and how to be courteous to others. I also shared the story of *Please* from a turn-of-the-century author, Alicia Aspinwall, which reminds us to let courteous words come out of our mouths often.

We then discussed three saints who especially emulate the virtue of courtesy: *St. Martin de Porres*, who trained at a young age to be a doctor and later became a Dominican friar. St. Martin de Porres was especially thoughtful to people who were sick, and often brought them home and allowed them to convalesce and sleep in his own bed. *Venerable Pierre Toussaint* was born a slave in Haiti. His grandmother, who was also a slave, taught him to read and write. The plantation owner, Mr. Berard, was so impressed with young Pierre that he had him work in the house and gave him free access to his library. When the family left Haiti for New York City, Pierre and his sister went as well. In New York, Pierre became an apprentice to a hairdresser, learning that trade and becoming very successful. Mr. Berard traveled back to Haiti but became ill and died, leaving Mrs. Berard a widow. Though Pierre could afford to purchase his freedom and in fact did purchase his sister's freedom, he felt an allegiance to Mrs. Berard and chose to remain a slave to her, while also secretly financing the household. After Mrs. Berard's death, Pierre married and together with his wife, opened a home and school for orphans. He also helped fund the freedom of many slaves, helped poor widows find jobs, and made secret contributions to widows. *Venerable Solanus Casey* was born in Wisconsin and began to study for the priesthood at 21 years of age, later becoming a Capuchin friar. He was known as "the doorkeeper" because he served as porter at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit, Michigan, always treating each visitor-rich or poor-as he would have treated Christ.

We concluded our whole-group discussion with a presentation by Mrs. Richard's Kindergarten music students as they shared what showing courtesy means to them and sang the song, *Please, Thank You, Sorry*. You can view their sweet performance [here](#).

Students continued the lesson and discussion on courtesy in their homeroom Faith Family groups, where teachers reviewed the virtue of courtesy and discussed ways students can practice this virtue in their own lives. Students then participated in our service project this month, called *Box of Joy*, putting together gift boxes for less fortunate children to enjoy at Christmas. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our school families, we had more than enough items to fill over 40 boxes, and will be picking up more boxes tonight to fill at least 10 more with all of the remaining items! The *Box of Joy* service project was another valuable lesson and opportunity for students to practice courtesy and so many other virtues as well. Faith Families concluded by praying the Faith Families prayer together.

It is our hope that the children continue to reflect on the virtue of courtesy and the many ways we can show courtesy to those around us.

“Life is short, but there is always time enough for courtesy.” –Ralph Waldo Emerson

Blessings,

Laura Behee, M.Ed.
Principal