

With God We Soar – St. Dominic School Ninety Years Strong

My Dear Friends

On almost every page of the Gospels it says that Jesus taught. In fact, Jesus is called “teacher” at least sixty times. He then commissions His followers to be teachers. Every parent knows what it means to be a teacher, and the Church considers them to be the first and most important teachers in the life of their children. Teaching, and by extension schools, have been an integral part of the mission of the Church from its beginning.

Our parish was founded October 29, 1933, and within twelve months the school was opened. The first collection at St. Dominic, that first Sunday, amounted to \$4 and some change. Imagine, in the midst of the great depression, with \$4, the founding families of St. Dominic began a school. That’s how important our founding pastor and families thought it was to have a Catholic education for their children.

The parish opened St. Dominic School with ninety-three children on September 10, 1934. That was ninety years ago. Ninety years of serving the community and bringing Catholic education to Delhi. That ninety years of education was made possible because of the commitment of parishioners to the parish. This was no small matter to a small group of Catholics struggling in the time of the Great Depression. Yet, Catholic education was a priority for them, something they were willing to sacrifice to achieve for their children. What sort of courage did that take! Incredible!

Our school is a parochial school, which means, it is part of the mission of the parish and the Church. The school helps form the intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual character of our children. More importantly, it also has a primary and integral role in the faith formation and Catholic education of our children. The school is part of the evangelization mission of the parish. Therefore, Catholic doctrine, moral teaching, anthropology, faith and religious practices are an essential part of our school life.

The commitment to the parish is what makes it possible to have a school and by extension athletics, youth programs, arts, and so many wonderful programs and events. You don’t have to have children in the school to appreciate the value of a Catholic education. The school is supported and financially subsidized by the parish. The parish helps meet the financial needs of the school because it is part of the mission of the parish and a service to the parish community. This is why it is essential that all parishioners support our endeavor to keep St. Dominic school open and successful for the next ninety years.

From the beginning St. Dominic parish has been committed to Catholic education and that commitment is one of generosity, determination, courage and sacrifice. The fruit of this sacrifice, toil and sweat, is generations who have made a mark on life and history, but more importantly, on families and the lives of our children. Our historic commitment to education has given generations the opportunity to succeed and live good, worthwhile, and fruitful lives. Your great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and now you, have made that possible.

Thank you for your support and thank you for sharing your gifts with us for the building up of the Kingdom of God. Without the parish support there is no school, your support is that important.

Congratulations on providing an outstanding education for so many children through St. Dominic School. Thank you to the generations of teachers who have formed our children in the faith. St. Dominic School: Ninety years of Catholic education – generations of faith - a tradition of success.

Fr. Ben

90th Anniversary of St. Dominic School

On Sunday, October 29, 1933, the Feast of Christ the King, Mass was offered for the first time in the newly organized parish by Fr. Grimmelsman, the founding pastor. It was offered in the Mutual Aid Hall at Greenwell and Delhi Pike, on a makeshift altar. For almost a year Mass was offered in that temporary facility.

The first of many generous gifts from parishioners in those ninety years came from Anthony and Bernadina Robben. They offered the archbishop the six acres of land that the parish now occupies.

In January 1934, plans were made and approved to build a one-story brick building with four classrooms on the first floor and a temporary chapel in the basement, the present Teal Hall. The cost was \$27,500. On June 11 work began. That summer men of the parish came in their spare time with trucks to haul dirt and fill. Bricklayers at \$.50 cents an hour soon had the walls up. On July 22, practically every Catholic in the community turned out on an extremely hot day to witness Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Albers bless the cornerstone of the new building. After the ceremony all adjourned to the welcome shade of Joe Robben's woods to celebrate with a picnic festival. It was a gala occasion. Then on September 2, 1934, a prayer of thanksgiving rose from every heart as the first Mass was offered in the new basement chapel.

Eight days later, on September 10, 1934, St. Dominic School opened. Three Sisters of Charity taught all ninety-three students enrolled that first year. Sr. Mary Emma, the principal, taught grades six, seven, and eight, Sr. Matthew Marie, taught grades three, four, and five., and Sr. Rose Gertrude taught grades one and two. Seven little girls and nine little boys entered the first grade that year. Among them were Mary Elaine Lipps (Schoener) and George Robben.

In June of 1935, St. Dominic graduated its first class, made up of five boys; Clem Wolfer, Jr., Louis Otting, Maurice Feist, Matthew McDonough, and Louis Lipps, St. Dominic's first son to enter the priesthood.

There was a significant growth in the parish over the next eight years. An addition was added to the first building in 1938. This included a chapel with a kitchen and dining room in the basement. (The present principal's office and Tile Hall.) On October 9, 1938, the congregation gathered for Mass in the new Chapel.

By 1942, another four-classroom wing was added to the North end of the original building to accommodate the now one hundred and eighty students. All of these building projects cost money. The parishioners held card parties and famous chicken dinners to help with the building costs.

After the war the real building boom hit Delhi Township. Farm after farm was subdivided and new streets put through. Delhi was changing from a rural to a suburban community. Traffic on the roads which the children used to walk was becoming heavier. In 1948, a school bus committee was formed and for years St. Dominic had its own school bus service.

St. Dominic School rushed to keep pace with the building boom and increasing enrollment. So much of the history of the first twenty-five years of the parish involved the expanding school. A new wing and gymnasium and convent were added to the campus. Families grew from seventy to one thousand one hundred. School enrollment grew from ninety-three to an all-time high of one thousand one hundred and sixty-seven in 1967.

The Sisters of Charity played a major part in the growth and development of St. Dominic parish. The Sisters staffed our school for seventy of the ninety years. They taught our children and were a major influence on the goodness we experience in this parish. Sr. Patrick Ann O'Conner was a major leader in this parish, serving as principal of our school and teacher here for many years.

For ninety years, graduates of St. Dominic have watched their grandchildren graduate from our Blue Ribbon School, they have watched them serve Mass, they have watched them compete on our athletic teams and have watched them grow into responsible adults.

A special thank you to all the teachers and generous parishioners who have helped us pass on the Catholic Faith to generations of St. Dominic children! Happy Birthday St. Dominic School!

Fr. Jim Walsh