

The Perpetual Light

Presented to graduates, friends and supporters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School



Principal's Perspective By: Katie Franco

“Root yourself in God, so you can see God”. I have always been a believer that God works in mysterious ways. I have also learned recently that life can be seen through a number of different lenses and that if we choose to see God, God appears in all things that we do. This has been true for me personally, and more true than ever for Our Lady of Perpetual Help School as we have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. The aforementioned quote was this year’s school theme. We have focused, as a staff, on the virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. We, as a school, are in solidarity with so many who, amid the pandemic, have faced uncertainty, despair, pain, and worry. However, in changing the lens, we see the themes of faith, hope and love arise from the scope of the last ten months.

One example of faith I have witnessed is in our current staff and students. OLPH staff, parents and students have shown their love and dedication for our school by trusting us to continue teaching their children in the charism of the Catholic faith as well as in an academically rigorous way. OLPH School changed to at home Distance Learning literally overnight. Not one day of school was missed as students and teachers began to teach and learn from home. God’s hand has guided us most recently as we re-opened our school building to in-person learners. While a great majority of our students are continuing to learn from home, we are happy to see the students with us each day and having the faith in us to keep moving forward.

An example I have seen of hope is from the OLPH alumni community. As I mentioned, the pandemic has brought days of much worry and even stress for our school. There have been days where events compacted one onto the other and it was hard to find the next step, let alone hope-that was very far from our minds. Hope came in the beauty of the OLPH School’s alumni community and its unity. Whether it was a call from an alumnus telling me a story about their favorite teachers, or a connection made to offer a service or skill from a former student-the OLPH community in all of its glory, continued to show up and we continue to be showered with many blessings to get us to where we are now. We are grateful for the strong bond of the OLPH School alumni. The love in this community runs so deep.

Lastly, I would like to share an example of love with you. As OLPH’s principal, this school is very near and dear to my heart. I can say the same is true for many of you. Your years at OLPH have made an impact on you and you continue to look back on your time here with happiness and joy. Recently, one famed alumni, Mr. John Madden ‘50, shared his stories of his love for OLPH School with us. The connection with Mr. Madden sparked the creation of a new school scholarship program which families can apply for starting now. **The Madden Scholarship funded by John Madden** will take effect this coming school year and will help alumni families, families with multiple children as well as families who live in Daly City afford an OLPH education. Mr. Madden cannot be thanked enough for his partnership with us and the love that he has shown for our school.

We are hopeful for the future of our school thanks to all of you. I will continue to pray that you stay safe, well and happy.

ANNUAL ALUMNI AUCTION UPDATE!

Unfortunately, we will not be able to hold our Annual Alumni Auction this year. This event generates funds for the school’s yearly operating budget. In fact, the pandemic has not allowed us to hold any fundraisers. Fundraisers allow OLPH to keep tuition within reach for our families, while at the same time, providing necessary tools to provide a quality education for our students. Even though we cannot be together, we hope that you will be able to continue your support of OLPH by participating in the annual raffle. The raffle will be held, at school, on March 26, 2021. Winners will be contacted after the live drawing.

We look forward to seeing you again next year when we will celebrate milestone years for the graduates from the classes of: 1951, 1952, 1961, 1962, 1971, 1972, 1981, 1982!

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?" (SHAKESPEARE) PART II

WRITTEN BY: REV. JOSEPH A. GORDON '59

Countless elementary and junior high school students at OLPH, as well as CCD young folks and catechists, remember that Top Of the Hill landmark fondly known as "OLPH School", or simply "OLPH", which opened its doors to nine grades in September 1947. However, in addition to the extraordinary educational opportunities for all K through 8 grade levels in the new building, two stunning vistas were also welcomed: from the library windows, the Farallon Islands and beyond unfold magnificently (if the fog is not too assertive); and from the upper floor classrooms overlooking Wellington Avenue, a perhaps-nodding student could view the Bay Bridge, the east Bay, and downtown San Francisco. Unfortunately, though, it is likely that only a few know much about the person who, as the first among a team of equals, oversaw the dream of that edifice becoming a reality. He was OLPH Pastor from 1939 to 1968, Father (later Monsignor) James Bergin. Equally important on that team of equals were OLPH Principal (1945-51) Sister of St Joseph of Orange, Mary Clarice Doyle, and her Sister- and lay teacher- colleagues. Here, then, is a look back at the first among those equals, whose name is seen on the bronze dedication plaque at the main entrance to our alma mater, "School and Hall, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Erected A.D. 1947, Reverend James Bergin, Pastor".

Born in Fairfield, County Leix, Ireland on May 22, 1890, James Bergin attended Ireland's prestigious St Patrick's College, Maynooth for his final two university years, where he majored in Sacred Scripture and history. Released by his Diocesan bishop in Ireland for priestly "missionary" work in the U.S. Diocese of Richmond, Virginia in 1912, Bergin completed his final four seminary years at St Mary's Seminary in Baltimore ("I sailed across the Atlantic for America not long after the Titanic", he would point out). Ordained in Baltimore on May 25, 1916, after two assignments in the Richmond Diocese Bergin was persuaded by his Maynooth classmate who accompanied him to St Mary's, Thomas Millett, to request permission to accompany him for service in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. The Bishop of Richmond granted his request, and since San Francisco Archbishop Edward Hanna had already heard of Bergin's impressive academic record in Maynooth and Baltimore, Hanna eventually assigned the young priest to the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, and he encouraged Bergin to accept a part-time position as Instructor of Sacred Scripture on the faculty of nearby College of the Sacred Heart, at the request of the Sisters who conducted the College. In 1930, though, the campus was moved to San Francisco, where it would henceforth be known as "San Francisco College for Women", popularly called "Lone Mountain". Bergin nevertheless continued at the new site for six years, where he was consistently considered a superb classroom professor. The Sisters valued his part-time role, and to that end, wishing to retain him yet not wanting to burden him – he had by then been appointed pastor of Our Lady of the Pillar parish in Half Moon Bay – they adjusted his schedule to facilitate the long drive from the coast to Lone Mountain. Moving to Sebastopol in 1936, however, made it impossible for him to continue his teaching duties.

Following his time in Sebastopol, Fr Bergin was named Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 1939, where he remained after his retirement in 1968 until his passing on September 5, 1971. With his long-standing interest in schools and academics, and knowing that the school facilities at OLPH in 1939 were painfully inadequate, he agreed to the Archbishop's request to erect a new building, although he was somewhat fearful of the impending debt. Making matters even more challenging were the post-World War II mandatory restrictions on most all construction work.

Bergin had established a reputation as an outstanding teacher who could work well with Sisters, but in the late 1950s he encountered numerous difficulties with OLPH School's administration at the time. Some even felt that he was barely tolerating, at best, the presence of the Sisters. When a new Sister-principal was named by Orange to help improve things, the Superior General made it clear to Sister: "If you have any problems with 'that pastor', please let me know immediately and I will begin the process of withdrawing our Sisters completely. Enough is enough." (Sister Clarice had admirably completed her six-year term in 1951, as did her respected replacement six years later). Orange had made a wise choice for a replacement to follow Sr Clarice and her successor, and while in his final pre-retirement years Bergin wholeheartedly supported the new principal and her staff. Throughout his pastorate Bergin was penurious with parish money, occasionally to the detriment of the physical parish plant – never with the school, however – but he successfully liquidated the enormous OLPH debt that he inherited upon his arrival in 1939, as well as the debt which resulted from the building of the new school in 1947.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School of today, and the building in which educating and forming elementary school students – and their families – superbly carries on the school's admirable work, a fitting honor for that first name among a team of equals in the building of the Top of the Hill landmark, Monsignor James Bergin.

[NOTE: Next in this series will be a look-back at Monsignor James Bergin's successor, Fr John W Mullen.]

ALUMNI EVENT

The 2020 Alumni Event “Rock Around the Clock” was a great success. Attending the event were alums who graduated in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. A notable graduate from the class of 1950, Mr. John Madden, celebrated his 70th anniversary. Although not in attendance, Mr. Madden was a major sponsor of the event.



MAJOR SPONSORS INCLUDE:

Duggan’s Serra Mortuary • Pat (Ricci ‘56) Casey
Tom Ryan (‘51) • Michael Ryan (‘53)
The Ferrari Family • Lucky Chances Casino
Katie Franco • Bill and Roxanne Kovacich
Mary Tunnell • Arlene and John Castillo
Tony Spiteri • World’s Finest Chocolate
Jaime Stella • Michelle McGill

RAFFLE WINNERS

Elsie (Belli) Tonelli (‘40) \$50
Timothy Denning (‘67) \$100
Gabriel Ochoa (Parent) \$250
Tony Spiteri \$500
(Donated his winnings to the school)
Vicki Hennessy (‘51) \$1,000
(Donated her winnings to OLPH Parish)



This photograph appeared in the Catholic San Francisco newsletter, January 14, 2021



Mr. John Madden ‘50 has generously funded **The Madden Scholarship** for the benefit of families at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OPEN HEARTED CLASS OF 2020!



At the beginning of the school year 2019, the 8th grade class decided that their class name would be “Open Hearted”. They chose this name because it represented to them the spirit of who they were and wanted to continue to be in life. When the pandemic hit, our school transitioned into a Distance Learning program. This meant that the 8th grade class would not be able to end their school year enjoying the same traditions that previous classes had. However, the Open Hearted Class of 2020 handled their disappointment with grace.



They understood, that although they were “missing out” on the experience of walking down the church aisle for the final time or their graduation dinner dance, that others around them, were missing out on so much more. They determined, as a class, to enter into their future with open hearts, rather than disappointment. As the graduates paraded through the school yard, in their decorated cars, to receive their diplomas, they did so with joy. The staff was there to cheer them on and we couldn’t have been more proud!

Special awards were received by the following students:

- **ACCEPTED WITH DISTINCTION TO IMMACULATE CONCEPCION ACADEMY — Ashley Salazar**
 - **ACCEPTED WITH HONORS IN THE ENGINEERING PROGRAM AT SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL — Angelynn Gumboc**
 - **THE BUD DUGGAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR KINDNESS AWARD — Janine Ferrer**
- This award is presented to the student who generously and unselfishly treated others with kindness and charity.
- **HIGH ACADEMIC AWARD — Samantha Macola, Matt Lee, Angelynn Gumboc & Adriel Barrion**
 - **CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP — Paul Anthony Ledda**
 - **SPIRIT AWARD — Jeselle Santos**
 - **SAINT AWARD — Adriel Barrion & Georgia Alvarado**

The Our Lady of Perpetual Help Saint Award is given to the student who has exemplified the spirit of OLPH School. This student is a Spiritually Active Christian, an Accountable Citizen, an Independent Thinker, a Noteworthy Learner and a Thoughtful Choicemaker. This year 2 students received this award.

Special Note: We are planning to announce The James Costello Service to Students Award and the Father Antonio Petilla Community Award at this year’s graduation.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



VERONICA IGNAO graduated from OLPH in 2012. After graduating from Saint Ignatius High School, Veronica graduated from SFSU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education. She will begin her credential program this summer. Lucky for us, Veronica has taken on the role of long-term substitute for 5th grade.

“I am enjoying being back again at OLPH, but this time in a different role. Looking at OLPH from a different lens, I never realized how hard the teachers here work to help their students. Sitting in front of the class, in a room where I sat as a student, gives me a whole new perspective. OLPH will always be a special place for me. It is where my faith journey and passion for teaching began.” – Veronica Ignao ‘12



JANET CIRIMELE



FRANK CIRIMELE

JANET (BOSMA) CIRIMELLE '51 and her twin brother **FRANK BOSMA '51**, are celebrating their 70th year graduation anniversary this year. Janet and Frank have been active supporters of the Alumni Auction event since it began. Janet and Frank both keep in contact with their classmates and said that they will always support OLPH because it was such a special place and time in their lives. They value the friendships that were formed during those years here. A close friend of theirs, **TOM RYAN '51**, is another annual OLPH supporter and also celebrates his 70th anniversary.

Congratulations to all of the 1951 graduates!!



TOM RYAN

Special Note: **CELESTE JAYMOT GILLORY '55** is interested in finding her classmates for a reunion. If you, or anyone you know, is a graduate of 1955 please have them contact cacese36@gmail.com

† IN MEMORIAM †

SISTER THECLA CHUML, C.S.J. August 11, 1929—August 26, 2020
OLPH TEACHER 1949-1951

Sister Thecla, native of Tustin, CA, entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange in 1946. Soon after her first vows, she began teaching elementary school full time in parishes both in northern and southern California as well as in Texas and Maui, Hawaii. Sr. Thecla received her BA from San Francisco College for women and her lifetime teaching credential from the State of California.

In 1974, she was asked to be the Activities Director at the Sisters' retirement house. Eleven years later she began serving as head librarian at St. Joseph Library; a post that she held for 15 years, overseeing the modernization of the library.

Sr. Thecla retired to Regina Residence. She entered eternal life on Aug. 26, 2020. Due to the pandemic, her funeral was private and she is interred at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Orange.



CATHERINE VILLEGAS '80

ARLENE MAY STORM "STORMIE" '45



The Perpetual Light

Father Augusto Villote

OLPH Pastor

Katie Franco

Principal

Sheila Ortega

Vice Principal



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Our Lady of Perpetual Help School

**ANNUAL RAFFLE TICKETS
ENCLOSED**

Together We Can!

17th Annual Raffle

Friday, March 26, 2021

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP SCHOOL.
DONATIONS DURING THIS CHALLENGING YEAR ARE MUCH APPRECIATED AND
WE TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!