

Catholic High Parentlines

Supporting our parents in their role as the primary educators of the Catholic faith

Owensboro Catholic High School

June 24, 2020

Congratulations to the Class of 2020

Congratulations to our 2020 graduates and their families, and we so much look forward to seeing all our returning students soon!

It is quite an understatement to say that the Class of 2020 had to deal with a lot at the end of their high school careers. The last quarter at Catholic High is normally the "home stretch," filled with many "rites of passage" that they have seen all the senior classes before them get to participate in, and it was suddenly taken away. They did not get to have: Holy Week services, prom, day of recollection, shirt signing, spring sports, plays, concerts, day-to-day interaction, closing Mass, Baccalaureate, OR a graduation ceremony!

After March 13th, the world changed for our school and for the rest of the world, and the future was and still is uncertain. After it became clear we would not be going back to school, our thoughts immediately turned to the end of the year and how we could give our seniors a proper send-off. We originally sent out options with dates for a graduation at the SportsCenter, Steele Stadium, Hines Center drive-by, or the least appealing, a virtual graduation.

Based on what they were telling us, we knew students were losing interest with waiting, and parents were getting frustrated because other schools were having some type of virtual or drive-by ceremony, but our goal, with patience, was to come up with something that would allow us to come together in person, in some capacity.

Low and behold, after several weeks, our patience paid off. We found out that Masses were going to be allowed with

restrictions. That is when our graduation committee started thinking about the idea of a Senior Mass since they didn't get to participate in all those Masses previously mentioned. There were all types of constraints that seemed pretty daunting to overcome, but I kept thinking back to the very first article in Parentlines I wrote 10 years ago: When God closes a door, he opens a window--and this was our window.

Over the next couple of weeks, our committee brainstormed, met, discussed and critiqued possibilities. We then devised a plan, got approval from Bishop Medley and the Green River Health Department and announced it. Of course, the guidelines changed within two days of our announcement, so we adjusted our plan to allow more family members to attend.

There were plenty of things to worry about since just days before the Mass date, there was rain predicted, a heat advisory, high humidity, an air quality alert, AND we had not had the opportunity to practice.

Obviously, the weather is always the wildcard in an outdoor event, and with the forecast for intermittent rains all day and a downpour as late as 4:30, there were major concerns. However, we stuck with the forecast chance that was in our favor. By 7:45, the sun was setting behind the trees, temperatures had dropped and even a slight breeze started to roll through Steele Stadium. With lots of relief, it finally looked as though we would get to send our seniors to their next phase of life in the most fitting way possible--celebrating Mass as the LAST event of their challenging senior year!

Not that I am surprised, but I can't begin to say enough about how well the graduates and all their families did with respecting all the guidelines we had for such an emotional event. We know how everyone would like to have had pictures,

**Gates Settle,
Principal**



given congratulatory hugs and just visited with friends and family. So the sacrifice is so much appreciated since we made a commitment to those guidelines that were approved. I have mentioned many times how proud I am to be the principal at OCHS, but never more than on the evening of June 21st, 2020. With all the obstacles and challenges facing us a month or so ago, it all came together very well, and I think that those in attendance would agree that it was a very special Mass and ceremony for everyone.

I can't end without recognizing all those who made this a special night for the Class of 2020, their families and the OCS community: Maintenance Supervisor Terry Gabbert, Counselors Scott Lowe and Connie McFarland, Class Sponsors Ginny Coomes and Jill Risse, AD Jason Morris, Theology Department Chair Father Jason McClure, Senior Theology teacher Lisa Higdon and Assistant Principal Kurt Osborne--all deserve a huge THANKS for their time and effort in organizing this event.

I also can't end without mentioning how it seems that with everything taken into account, the Good Lord was looking over this night and this class for us to come together one last time!

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Blessings to all and GO ACES!