



*Below is a guest feature from Mrs. Laura Karlen, a St. Ambrose parent who was praying with students at Planned Parenthood during the Spring Service Day. Her encounters there led to an incredible story and we wanted to share this beacon of hope with our community!*

**"GLORY BE!"** Mary Ann Doll prayed emphatically. Mary Ann, along with her husband, Jerry, and grandchildren, Joseph (SAA class of 2025) and Elizabeth (2027), were overjoyed!

As they concluded their first Rosary decade, a woman leaving Planned Parenthood rolled down her car window to announce that she was keeping her baby. Her face was lit up by a huge smile. "You people praying did the job," the mother explained excitedly.

The pregnant woman had arrived two hours earlier, around the time Julie Draves and her seven children—including Maria (2023), Simon (2025), and John Paul (2027)—arrived to the 40 Days for Life vigil as a part of their Spring Service Day work, praying to end abortion.

The expectant mother entered the abortion facility for her appointment, but her child's father remained in the Planned Parenthood parking lot. When nine SAA students arrived for the next vigil hour to replace the Draves Family, one student noticed the man had rolled down his window, as if to listen while the students prayed fervently, each aware that life hung in the balance. Mary Ann, Jerry, Joseph and Elizabeth must have tipped the scale with their peaceful presence.

God answered these prayers in an unforgettable way, both for the family spared from abortion and the SAA community whose prayers and presence made the difference.

Jerry Doll reflected, "I feel confident the seeds of defending life are planted in all of these young people. They will only grow as [the students] continue on their faith journey."



Jerry has reason to be hopeful that God will answer his prayers to end abortion through his own grandchildren—and all the students he sees at his home parish, St. Thomas Aquinas. Sometimes, we see the answer to our prayers quickly. Sometimes, Service Day saves lives!

*"Amazing dancing. Amazing acting. Amazing singing. These Ambrosians are phenomenall!"*

*"It was spectacularly overwhelming! The depth of feeling in every way, the phenomenal dancing, the artful portrayal of the characters - astonishing."*

*"Amazing and professionally done. Such a pleasure to watch. Hard to believe these are high school and middle school kids. So talented!"*

After the 2020 postponement, the students of St. Ambrose Academy brought their all to the stage with Singin' in the Rain! Theater, like all of our extra-curriculars, are not only fun, but an opportunity to grow in many skills and virtues.

Everything we do at St. Ambrose in and out of the classroom is connected. This show was an opportunity to give glory to God through the gifts He has given each of our students, to share that joy with audiences, and persevere through difficulty.

Our deep and heartfelt thanks to the team who made this show possible - Diane Marsland, Angela Hineline, James Carrano, Alyssa Dvorak, Josh Vaughn, Andy Manke, Rick Mills, Theresa Klinkhammer, Liza Campanella, John and Mary Ann Gernetzke, Laura McBain, Laura Karlen, Peggy Kruchten and so many others. Your tireless dedication to these students is inspiring.

And thank you to the many who watched online and for the limited audiences we were able to host in person.

You are a joy to perform for and we look forward to seeing even more of you in person in 2022!



*In this reflection, SAA English teacher Ms. Katie Behrens shares a special faith-related highlight of the St. Ambrose student community this year as they explore new opportunities to grow more deeply as disciples of Christ.*

In the face of difficulty, the Holy Spirit often prompts new growth, as a plant grows a new shoot. This year, some of our students felt a greater need than ever to draw near to God and share with each other how to live out our faith. Our students receive the best religious education in the classroom, but putting that knowledge into practice can take work and intention.

Their interest in forming a small group of prayer support and my own work in ministry provided the framework for interested students to grow in their own discipleship with Jesus.

Our group meets roughly every other week and usually draws in 8-12 students, primarily in the sophomore, junior, and senior classes. Developmentally, this is exactly the time when adolescents are deciding what they will do with the faith that has been handed down to them.

Meetings are a combination of small-group discussion, praying with Scripture through Lectio Divina, and praying together as a group. We have also focused on the 4 practices of a disciple laid out in Bishop Hying's "Go Make Disciples" initiative: 15 minutes of daily prayer, monthly confession, regular penance, and setting aside Sunday as the Lord's Day.

Our students are hungry to talk in a meaningful way about the challenges and victories of the spiritual life.

Knowing you have a community of people walking with you, that you're not undertaking the journey alone, is a key factor in

persevering in the faith, and this group has given the students an opportunity to build that community among their peers.

During a recent meeting, the students prayed aloud for each other, and hearing them lift each other up in prayer to our loving Father, as mature people of faith, was a unique blessing I wish every parent could hear.

Although there are many things I hope we can accomplish in the future with student ministry - particularly a student intercessory prayer group and more service opportunities - I have great hope that we are laying the groundwork for a supportive community of young people to share in the walk of discipleship together.



Community is an important part of our identity and of our human nature. While SAA students have been able to be together in person this year in class, the effects of the pandemic and last year's lockdowns still weigh on many of us.

So what better plan to make than to take a day and get away! Junior Andrew Glanville (pictured at right), "was really looking forward to getting out with my entire class to interact in a way we hadn't in a long time."



Students started the day with Mass and then ventured westward to spend a day in the great outdoors at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville. SAA History teacher Michael Kwas and parent Melanie Pfeil led the group and helped facilitate the activities and conversation alongside the Bethel staff.

Andrew continued saying, how, "usually, we're all very busy and we had only gotten busier since the beginning of the school year. We really used the retreat to grow together as a class and to push each other to do new things that we all really enjoyed. My favorite part was the giant swing. Not necessarily doing it myself, but watching all of my friends go up and have a great time while being encouraged the whole time was amazing."

Team building, hiking, a low ropes course, and a lot of good conversation were definitely a welcome respite and way to bond as this group looks ahead toward their last year at SAA. Go Guardians!