

Reflection and Blessing at Vino on the Veranda September 24, 2020

SGHS Stuart Ave

Sister Joanna Burley

Good evening everyone!

Thank you so much for coming this evening to celebrate being an alumna of Saint Gertrude High School.

Being HERE, at this place, brings with it a bag of mixed emotions, I'm sure. This building has stood on this block since 1913 – at least, the original part of it has. 107 years! This morning I gave the sophomores, juniors, and seniors a bit of the history of this building, and reminded them that their memories of being here are now a part of the lore of Saint Gertrude High School, and must be preserved and cherished. You, too, have stories and memories, and many of you have mothers and grandmothers and aunts and great aunts whose stories you can probably tell. This building lives as a part of our Saint Gertrude family because the memories of laughing, crying, learning and praying are kept alive.

I also reminded the girls that 98 years ago there was a group of young women just like them, who left a school they had known well, St. Edith's in Bristow, and came to this building, a convent full of Benedictine Sisters with 2 large classrooms in the basement. Those women were the last to ever touch the walls of St. Edith's, just as these sophomores, juniors and seniors will have been the last to touch these walls. And you – you all are a link in that chain of strong, courageous, loving women.

Finally I reminded the students that this building is just that, a building, because Saint Gertrude is so much more than a building. Saint Gertrude IS wherever we are. Wherever Gerties gather together, there is the spirit of Saint Gertrude, there is the community ideal which we all have tried and continue to try to bring to the world, beyond the academics and athletics that challenge minds and bodies.

As alumnae, you know these things. That you keep in touch, that you care about the future of the school, that you continue to share your memories is proof that YOU are Saint Gertrude High School.

YOU understand that at the root of it all, the bond of sisterhood is the hallmark of our school.

So will you pray with me, please?

Loving God of all creation, we gather here at our beloved building and give you thanks for your love and care for the young women of Richmond over the past 98 years. We give you thanks for all who have worked, studied, prayed and played here, for the parents who sacrificed so their daughters could attend here, the Benedictine Sisters who envisioned this school's existence and continue to envision its future.

We are grateful for the memories that we share, and we are grateful for the opportunities we have been given. And once again we ask your blessing, gracious God, on all who call Saint Gertrude home.

May our legacy, the Saint Gertrude sisterhood, begun here so many years ago continue where we now reside, and far into the future. And may those – in the future – who will find their home ;in this building be blessed as we have been blessed.

Hold us in your heart, sweet Jesus. Hold our joys and sorrows and dreams and desires gently in your heart. Let us never forget that you are with us always.

Bless us, protect us, and give us peace.

Amen.