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Mount Mercy Latin Students Experience the Past

Recently twenty Mount Mercy Academy Latin students had the opportunity to visit Lackawanna's own local treasure, Our Lady of Victory National Shrine and Basilica. Catherine Nicastro, Mount Mercy's Latin teacher wanted the students to have an opportunity to attend a Latin Mass and with the help of Campus Minister Jenny Golinski and Father Jeff Nowak, the plan expanded into a special experience that the students will not soon forget.

Shea Halpenny, a sophomore from Buffalo said "This trip was a great way to combine Latin, something I love, with the Catholic faith. The church was beautiful and it was rewarding to realize that after all these years that the Latin language is still alive and in use today not only around the world but even in our own backyard."

The students spent time learning about Father Nelson Baker's life and legacy and also had the chance to take a private tour of the Basilica itself and learn of the church's rich history and Father Baker's vision. The young women were able to examine from the outside the impressive and monumental architecture of the Basilica and note the similarities to Ancient Greek and Roman styles. Inside the Basilica they were allowed to traverse the perimeter of the Church and to look behind the altar. The students were able to apply their classroom knowledge as they translated the many Latin words that encircle the dome and the Latin words that are used to label statues and images.

The day reached its pinnacle when the students were able to listen to and participate in a mass said in Latin. Father Jeff Nowak provided some introductory explanation for the Mount Mercy women and then led them in a Latin mass as they followed along in their missals. Afterward Mount Mercy's president Margaret Cronin related to the students her personal feelings about the importance of Father Baker and Our Lady of Victory not only to the Western New York community but to herself as well.

"I wanted to provide my students with the experience of attending a Latin mass so that they could see real world application of Latin as well as the importance of Latin to the Catholic Church," Nicastro stated.

As evidenced by the comments of Shea Halpenny, Nicastro was successful in her mission to enrich the knowledge of her Latin students.



Mount Mercy Academy

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