

May 2018

Dear Senior Parent:

Thank you for all of your support. As the Commencement exercises for seniors grow near, I would like to remind you of the activities involving seniors with respect to meetings, examinations, graduation practices, Baccalaureate Mass and the Commencement exercises themselves. The Commencement ceremonies are an important part of the DeMatha tradition, and I know that they are important to your son and to you as parents. To make the ceremonies truly memorable we ask students, their families and invited guests to abide by the behavioral expectations we set.

Seniors have been assigned a College Prep Day. Assigned days can be found on the bulletin board outside of the Counseling Center. College Prep Day is **mandatory** to graduate from DeMatha. At DeMatha we engage in the formation of young men, not merely the passing of information to them.

Students begin their freshman year with a Mass and a retreat – they now close their careers at DeMatha with a Baccalaureate Mass. In a culture that understands little of the importance of ceremony and reflection and spiritual growth, it is crucial that those of us who do understand their significance pass that understanding on to others.

On **Thursday, May 17**, we will distribute caps and gowns during graduation practice at DeMatha after exams, review our expectations for the remainder of the school year and describe the type of behavior expected at the graduation ceremonies. Please hang the gowns and follow directions to remove wrinkles. (They can be ironed or thrown in the dryer for a few minutes with a damp towel.)

Graduation Practice: Practice will take place at the Shrine on **Wednesday, May 30, at 12:00 noon**. We will provide transportation to and from the Shrine for those interested but they must sign up on Friday, May 18. Buses will leave DeMatha at 11:15 a.m. and return at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Baccalaureate Mass: The Baccalaureate Mass will be held on **Wednesday, May 30, at DeMatha** in the **LT (SEAL) Brendan Looney Convocation Center at 4:00 p.m.** Each graduate has been given **6 tickets** for family members and friends to attend the Baccalaureate Mass. Fr. Damian Anuszewski, O.S.S.T. and Fr. James Day, O.S.S.T., will con-celebrate the Mass. Fr. James Day, O.S.S.T., will be the Homilist. Sunday or business attire is appropriate for guests. **Students must arrive to the old gym by 3:30 p.m.**

Graduation Ceremony: Graduation will take place on **Friday, June 1, 9:00 a.m.**, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, 400 Michigan Ave., NE, Washington DC, 20017, next to Catholic University. **Students should arrive by 8:30 a.m.** Each family is given 10 orange admission tickets for regular seating and 2 lime green admission tickets for reserved seating. Seating is limited at the Shrine. **No one will be admitted to the commencement exercises without an admission ticket, this includes small children.** Parents who arrive at graduation without the two special, lime green reserved tickets **will not** be seated in the reserved section. We divide the capacity of the Shrine by the number of seniors and assign tickets accordingly. Please understand these limits and do not request additional admission tickets. Seniors not using their entire allotment are encouraged to give unused tickets to other families or return them to us.

The graduation ceremonies are solemn in keeping with the dignity of the ceremony and the location. The Shrine is first and foremost, a church. Rowdiness, especially cheering during the distribution of diplomas is not allowed. This was an occasional problem in the past when friends or even parents failed to respect the requests made by the school. Please advise those to whom you will give admission tickets of our expectations. Failure to abide by behavioral guidelines **will result in the withholding of your son's diploma and transcript until disciplinary actions have been taken.** It would be a shame if your son's diploma and transcript is withheld for actions taken by friends and family members. All of our seniors are special and during the awarding of diplomas we are honoring and recognizing the entire class. We ask everyone to respect the community and not try to single out some graduates at the expense of others – that action is detrimental to the community and, therefore, you and your son.

We have received questions regarding whether or not children need admission tickets. **Anyone occupying a seat needs an admission ticket.** Considering the length of the ceremonies (2 hours plus), it is not advisable to bring very small children, especially those who might be seated on a lap.

Handicapped entrances are located on the side, ground floor near the gift shop. Elevators and a few wheel chairs are also available for use near the gift shop. Handicapped seating is available and will be designated in various areas of the Shrine. Please inform us of any special needs. We have arranged to have sign language interpreters for the ceremony.

At the graduation ceremony, your son will receive a facsimile of his diploma. For those interested, the diploma is 8 ½" x 11" in size. The official diploma can be picked up in the Main Office beginning **Monday, June 11**, from 7:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 7:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. on Fridays. The official diploma and transcript will be released provided all academic, financial and other requirements have been met – **this includes appropriate behavior, dress and no selfies by the student, family and friends during the graduation ceremony.**

Beach Week: DeMatha does not sanction, promote or endorse beach week activities.

Dress and Grooming Requirements: (Baccalaureate) Academic gown, no cap.

(Commencement) Academic gown, cap with tassel.

Required dress under the gown for both Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement is dress shirt with regular collar, **tie (no bow ties)**, dress trousers, dress shoes, socks and no coat. **Regular grooming required for school attendance is mandatory; clean-shaven, proper hairstyle (ponytails, dyed hair, individuals, etc. are NOT allowed), no earrings. No gum chewing. Students who fail to meet these standards will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony and may be required to do service around campus prior to release of their diploma and transcript.**

Graduation Speaker: Our Commencement speaker is Prince George's County, Chief of Police, Henry P. Stawinski, DeMatha Class of 1986. This year, members of the Class of 1968 will be in attendance.

Calendar of Events:

Thur., 5/3	Senior Exit Interview Due found on website - *MANDATORY*
Fri., 5/4	Senior Privilege Day – No Classes for Seniors, Junior/Senior Prom
Mon., 5/7 – Fri., 5/18	AP Exams
Wed., 5/16 - Fri., 5/18	Senior Final Examinations
Thurs., 5/17	GRADUATION PRACTICE, Convocation Center at 10:45 a.m. Cap and gown handed out at practice. Included in graduation fee. *MANDATORY ATTENDANCE*
Fri., 5/18	Senior Class Cook Out, Courtyard, Art Center, 6:00 p.m. Seniors & Faculty Only
Mon., 5/21-Wed., 5/23	College Prep Program, 9:00 a.m.- 10:30 a.m., St. John DeMatha Hall, *MANDATORY ATTENDANCE*
Wed., 5/23	Veracross grades updated
Thurs., 5/24-Thurs., 5/31	No classes for seniors
Wed., 5/30	GRADUATION PRACTICE at the Basilica of the National Shrine – 12:00 noon. *MANDATORY ATTENDANCE* Dress: (<u>for practice only</u>) sports shirts, trousers or walking shorts and shoes (athletic shoes are allowed) Parking: Limited parking near Shrine or free parking in lot across Harewood Rd.
Wed., 5/30	BACCALAUREATE MASS at DeMatha, Convocation Center - 4:00 p.m., Seniors must arrive by 3:30 p.m., to the old gym. *MANDATORY ATTENDANCE*
Fri., 6/1	COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES - 9:00 a.m. at the Basilica of the National Shrine. Seniors arrive by 8:30 a.m. *MANDATORY ATTENDANCE*
Sat., 6/30	Parent Exit Interview Due – see website www.dematha.org/parents

Personally, and on behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, I'd like to thank all of you for entrusting your sons to us and for working with us so diligently over the years. I believe that our work together to develop Faith-filled Gentlemen and Scholars is something of which we can all be proud. I look forward to seeing you, your son and your families throughout this wonderful season and especially on **June 1**. Go Stags!

Pax,

Daniel J. McMahon, Ph.D. '76, Principal