



Queen of Angels

MONTESSORI

Dear School Family,

We are writing to announce an exciting and important change at *Queen of Angels*.

Last year, as *Queen of Angels* celebrated the completion of its 12th year, the Board decided to make the school's current location its permanent home. This year we have turned our attention to initiating a comprehensive Master Plan to transform our home into a more beautiful and lasting environment. We are also taking the opportunity to evaluate key aspects of our school to make improvements where necessary and to better communicate the beauty of our program.

During the initial stages of this work, aided by parents, staff and outside experts, we have come to appreciate what we have even more. Our school is truly a little gem. The combination of Montessori education and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is incredibly unique and helps create an effective and joy-filled program for our children. We have a school environment that is welcoming and warm, full of life yet peaceful, challenging but safe and secure. We want to continue to offer this unique experience to other families for generations to come.

However, we have also learned that we often do not effectively communicate these strengths. We could more clearly and consistently tell prospective parents and donors who we are and what we have to offer. Resolving this weakness takes on greater urgency as we seek to become more firmly established and to raise the funds necessary to invest in our long-term home. The Board and Administration have decided to begin to address this issue, starting with our name.

We have decided to change the name of the school from *Queen of Angels Montessori School* to *The Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori*.

We have done so to more clearly communicate who we are and what we offer. The new name reinforces the two pillars of our unique educational experience: the Montessori Method and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The Montessori approach remains fundamental to the educational philosophy of the institution. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a touchstone aspect of how the school lives and communicates its Catholic identity. These dual pillars of the school are also the most common reasons why families come to and stay at Queen of Angels. Therefore, the new name also reinforces the unifying elements of our school, while remaining consistent with our Mission Statement.

This change will take place over the summer, as we finalize our new logo and begin to update our look and feel, and be fully in place by the start of school in the fall. We will be reaching out to the school community to ask for your assistance in bringing various concrete aspects of this change to life. Additional information will be provided over the summer.

While this name change is an important and exciting one, we understand that it may not be easy for many, that it may take time to process and that you may have additional questions or concerns. For many of us, we associate a great number of our deeply positive experiences here with our old name: *Queen of Angels*. There are also several practical considerations. We invite you to review the attached list of common questions and answers and to contact those listed below if you have additional thoughts or concerns. As a Board, composed exclusively of parent volunteers, our primary responsibility is to advance and protect the mission of the school. Part of that task is making difficult decisions to establish the strongest foundation possible to endure the test of time. This is one of those.

Mary, Queen of Angels, will remain an important presence in the life of the school, as she did in the life of Christ and does in the life of the Church. She will be formally recognized as the Patroness of the school and a team will be chartered to develop a set of traditions to insure she is tangibly honored as such. Our Lady has showered many blessings upon the school since it was founded in her name and entrusted into her hands. Our efforts to honor her will remain unchanged even as we increase our focus on her divine Son.

Finally, it is important to note that our new name, *The Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori*, highlights the role of the Person of Christ in our school. He is the center of our institution and the ultimate end for us all. The tangible image of the Good Shepherd is accessible and compelling to everyone, from small children to adolescents to adults. Through our catechetical program, children come to discover in a deep and meaningful way the love and light of a relationship with the Lord. They come to express their joy and wonder in Him through song and art and word. It is this experience, this relationship with Jesus Christ that is life-giving and life-transforming. By playing a part in bringing children to the Shepherd “in whom we find our being”, our school finds its most intimate purpose.

A famous quote stands framed in the school’s entry today. It expresses well the spirit behind the decision announced above:

*Be it known to all who enter here
that CHRIST is the reason for this school.
He is the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes.
He is the model of its faculty and
the inspiration of its students.*

We see a school where Christ, the Good Shepherd, is proclaimed not just in an atrium but in every classroom, on every entrance, on every uniform, on every sign, on the paper on which we write, and in our very name.

May the Good Shepherd continue to bless us, His flock, and grant you much rest and repose this summer.

Sincerely,

Sean Regan
Board of Trustees

Dan Teller
Principal and Founder

Common Questions

Below are some questions likely to arise from this change. You may have additional ones. If so, please contact Sean Regan (231-1155, regan.sc@pg.com) or Dan Teller (271-4171, dteller@qams.org). They would be happy to discuss this further with you.

Can you explain again why we are making this change?

We are changing the school's name to more clearly communicate who we are and what we offer. The new name – *The Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori* – reinforces the two pillars of our unique educational experience: the Montessori Method and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. These dual pillars of the school are also the most common reasons why families come to and stay at Queen of Angels. Therefore, the new name also reinforces the unifying elements of our school, while remaining consistent with our Mission Statement.

Why now?

This is a unique moment in the history of our school. We are at a critical point of maturation where our focus is shifting to establishing the institution firmly so that it can provide the type of environment and education that our children experience for decades to come. Thus the Board has embarked on the development of a comprehensive Master Plan and is making important decisions such as this.

What will happen to Mary, Queen of Angels? Will she have a role to play in the school going forward?

Our Lady, Queen of Angels, will remain an important presence in the life of the school, as she did in the life of Christ and does in the life of the Church. She will be formally recognized as the Patroness of the school and a team will be chartered to develop a set of traditions to insure she is tangibly honored as such. Our Lady has showered many blessings upon the school since it was founded in her name and entrusted into her hands. Our efforts to honor her will remain unchanged even as we increase our focus on her divine Son. In many ways, we view this change as part of her doing. As she serves to bring each of us to Christ, we believe that in some way she played a part in bringing our institution to Christ the Good Shepherd.

What other things will change? Is this the beginning of a significant shift away from what we have today?

There is no intent to substantially change who we are and what we offer. The name change is being made to better articulate and communicate the beautiful education at our school, not to signal a dramatic shift. The new name does, however, offer us all the opportunity to deepen our understanding of what *today* makes our school so unique and special. It serves as an invitation to deepen our understanding of the Good Shepherd, for example, and the journey our children experience through the catechetical program. The teachers will be exploring how they can more effectively communicate with and engage parents on the program, especially the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Will this only increase confusion about our school? There are many other institutions named “Good Shepherd” including a local Catholic parish.

Confusion is always possible even with different names, as evidenced by the occasional confusion of *Queen of Angels* with *Guardian Angels*' school. We are taking various steps to differentiate from other institutions in the Cincinnati area with ‘Good Shepherd’ in their names. The first step is to communicate ‘Montessori’ boldly in the name and logo. ‘Montessori’ clearly communicates ‘school’ (vs. ‘church’ or other institution). It also connotes a school that is NOT a parish school, since parish schools rarely utilize the Montessori Method. The second step is to take advantage of the news of the name change to clearly communicate who we are, where we are, and what we offer. While *Queen of Angels* has some level of awareness today, we intend to leverage this name change to dramatically increase both the awareness of the institution and the level of understanding people have of who we are. The greater the understanding, the less confusion follows.

Won't changing our name undermine the decade of name recognition that the school has established?

While a name change will undoubtedly cause some loss of recognition, we intend to take full advantage of the news created by it to increase overall awareness and understanding of our school. We also have the added

advantage (versus our founding days) of now having a broad network of supporters, donors, partners, and former parents that we will connect with to announce the name change and to reinforce who we are and what we offer.

What happens to our current uniforms and Spirit Wear? Do I have to buy all new clothes?

We intend to make the transition as painless as possible, though it is possible you may want to buy some new clothes. Our school colors will remain fundamentally unchanged, enabling you to continue to use the blue and white clothing that you have today. A team is being established to develop both short-term solutions (such as patches) for existing clothes as well as a new lineup of uniforms and Spirit Wear to reflect the new name and visual identity. These will be ready for the fall.

When exactly will the change take place?

We will be making visible changes to the school signage, letterhead, website, etc. over the course of the summer as we step through the process of transition. The change will be in full effect by the time children return to school in the fall.

How is *The Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori* relevant for the Middle-Schoolers, who have completed the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) in 6th grade?

The image of the Good Shepherd invites all people, from small children to adolescents to adults, into deeper relationship. Through our CGS program, children come to discover in a deep and meaningful way the love and light of a relationship with the Lord. They come to express their joy and wonder in Him through song and art and word. Although CGS ends after 6th grade, this relationship with Jesus Christ that is life-giving and life-transforming continues through catechetical methods developmentally suited to the middle school child. At this age, the Good Shepherd continues to call to the young person. It is our aim that the relationship begun and nurtured throughout the lower grades will continue to grow and develop in the middle school years.

Will other institutions, particularly high schools in the area, be informed of this change? How will they view this?

We will communicate the change to the entire network of institutions that have a relationship with Queen of Angels, including local high schools and the Archdiocese. We will reach out to them personally to articulate the positive nature of this change.

How can I help?

You are invited to help us transition the school to our new name. There are several opportunities to do so from developing ideas for new interior décor and external signage to creating new Spirit Wear to formalizing our core school traditions honoring the Good Shepherd and our patroness Mary, Queen of Angels. Please contact Susan Fisher (scfisher@mac.com) if you are interested in helping out.