

# The Dreamer

Exclusive news for the St. Joseph's Indian School DreamMakers



July 2021

## Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel: A Symbol of Hope



There are many buildings on the campus of St. Joseph's Indian School. But one seems to shine brighter than all the rest, especially on Sunday mornings.

Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel, with its scrawling ivy that beams bright green in the summer and amber in the fall, stands as a beacon of light ... of hope ... of faith in a higher power. It's also an illustration of the Lakota (Sioux) culture. The stained glass windows glisten in the sun with shimmering blues, greens, yellows and reds.

It's not just a sight to behold. It's an experience waiting to be had. The chiming song of the bells awaken one's spirit to receive The Lord's message from the pulpit at the west end of the building.

However, if one looks to the left, right or even down at their feet, more messages await them. Stories surrounding faith and the Lakota culture are told through symbols if time is taken to truly explore.

### The Bell Tower

The bell tower is made of three ascending rectangles. The rectangles symbolize the Black Hills of South Dakota and the Holy Trinity, indicating to all who enter that this is holy ground.

### The Sanctuary

Oscar Howe's *Indian Christ* painting was replicated on a tapestry, which is the focal point behind the altar. At seven-feet by 10-feet, the tapestry honors Jesus and all He stands for. At the front of the sanctuary are statues of two important saints. On the right is St. Joseph, our school's patron. On the left is Our Lady of the Sioux. Each statue was hand-carved from a single piece of wood. Together, their presence brings a balance in honoring both the Catholic faith and Lakota culture.

### The East Window

Just before the sun rises, there is a star that stands alone in the sky and shines brightly in the east. This is called the Morning Star

(over, please)



by the Lakota and announces the coming of sun and light to the earth. This depiction in the stained glass is a fitting symbol for the chapel, as it is the title given to Mary who appeared on the horizon announcing the coming of Christ.

Within the chapel, there are 17 stained glass windows. Some of them feature interpretations of:

- **Haŋbléčheyapi** — *Vision Quest*
- **Wanági Yuhápi** — *Keeping of the Soul*
- **Wiwáŋyang Wačhípi** — *Sundance*
- **Huŋkálowaŋpi** — *Making of Relatives*

### The Inside Floor

At the chapel's entrance, the terrazzo floor design signifies the four Gospels. Arrows show the Four Directions in Lakota culture. Together, they indicate the spread of the Gospels to the ends of the earth.

### Sunday Mass and More

While primarily a church for Sunday Mass, the chapel also hosts a number of other campus events. Prayer services, graduation ceremonies, guest speakers and more are held in this enlightened space.

As people enter, they are able to purify themselves with practices of **azilya** — *smudging* — with smoke from burning sage and sprinkles of Holy Water.

Events of the world have shifted how students, staff and families gather here. Each of St. Joseph's 20 campus homes take turns attending Mass in-person. When they are not there in-person, homes go online to attend Mass virtually. Following Mass, the Pastoral Team walks around campus and distributes Holy Communion to Catholic students and gives blessings to non-Catholic students. Because connection, even during difficult times, is what faith is all about.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Spirituality is an important part of our mission at St. Joseph's Indian School educating for life — *mind, body, heart and spirit*. **Azilya** — *smudging* — souls with burning sage and sweet grass is something that has been done for generations in tribal cultures. It is a cleansing ritual for bodies and minds.

Visit [stjo.org/prayer](http://stjo.org/prayer) to see our prayer of the week.



**St. Joseph's Indian School**  
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.  
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