

Good evening Mr. Fuertes!

I hope this email finds you well! I am sorry it has taken me so long to give an update email but when I arrived at school I've just been hitting the ground running! So many new opportunities have been offered to me and I am so excited to share them with you and the Knights!

First, with school, I am enjoying all of my classes! I am taking Christian Moral Principals, Middle Childhood Math, Foundations of Education, and History of the United States! This semester all but one of my classes is online which indeed is very different from last semester but I am enjoying it a lot more! In my theology class, we have been talking about Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* which discusses the catholic church's view on morality. Using the example of the young man that comes to Jesus asking what he must do to live eternally with the Father, Pope John Paul talks about the freedom that we view on earth and how it actually binds us to sin, whereas following God we are truly free by following the commandments! In my math class, it is very small but also very fun! Since I am focusing on middle childhood education that is the level of math that I need to take so I am very happy since math is not my strongest suit! My foundation of education class has also been so informative. I am learning a lot about what goes on behind closed doors after the kids leave as far as administrative things, but also how to make not just a classroom but a safe and comfortable place for kids to come to! My history class is a night class so I have that every night on Mondays which makes Mondays even harder! I do get a lot out of that class and the teacher doesn't make the class boring so time flies!

Recently I had gotten the opportunity to join a mission group called *Teachers Serving Moms*. Before COVID people who signed up would get paired with a family and helped the mom with various things such as babysitting, grocery running, or tutoring. Whatever the mom needed whoever was paired with them was there to provide. Due to COVID however things such as babysitting and anything close contact had to be postponed. When I came back this semester I wanted to join a ministry and I was emailed about this one! I signed up and was paired with a wonderful family who lives in Gaming Austria! \*(Side note: my school offers a semester abroad to Austria! So for the semester kids would go to Austria and take courses there as well as a tour around Europe, so the mother of the children happens to be a close friend of one of the professors of education and has been working with students from Franciscan for a long time)\*. I work with two kids a 6-year-old boy Palko and a 9-year-old girl Stefka! Every Monday and Wednesday I work on English writing, reading, and spelling! This has been an amazing opportunity because with this I am learning how to write lesson plans now instead of learning about them junior or senior year. I am

getting a head start as to how to put together a fun and productive lesson as well as different ways to each catering to each child!

Another opportunity I have gotten is joining a household! A household is a group of girls or guys that come together and focus on a particular covenant! I am joining *Love of the Lambs* so the focus will be on growing closer with Mary and her immaculate heart as well as growing in deeper love with Jesus. With being apart of this group I am excited to see how much my faith will continue to grow, especially with having a close and supportive group loving Christ with me!

In wanting to further and deepen my faith I am also apart of the RCIA on campus in receiving confirmation! I am so excited to be taking this next step towards my faith and my relationship with the Lord! I have learned so much and the conversations about the Lord have been so fruitful. It is a small group but in this way, we have all gotten to know each other so well and it is like a little family. The confirmation ceremony is on April 3rd and will be at the school! I am sure that they will be streaming it online so please let me know if you would like the link!

Celebrating Lent here has also been such a great journey. Attending mass every morning has been such a blessing and to see others at daily mass has also been such an encouragement! It is beautiful to see the number of young people that are choosing Christ every day and in this time of deep reflection to have good and meaningful conversations about God. This school is a blessing and coming here I have learned so much about myself and God. He is so good and with the trials that my family has faced this past year we see Him working even more. An encouragement that has always been with me is the story of the Footsteps. All of these great opportunities, graces, trials, and tests are all for the glory of Him!

I hope you and your family as well as the Knights and Our Lady are having a great season of Lent and know that you all are in my prayers! I am excited for the rest of the semester but I am excited to be coming home in May! The weather here is not like Washington at all, about a week ago we had so much snow! It was crazy! I definitely miss the rain!

Many blessings to you, your family, the Knights, and Our Lady!

Blessings,  
Destyne