A Sneaky Jesus Moment: The Story Behind Our New Library

St. Theresa School had an incredible opportunity over the summer to expand and transform our library. But when we look back at how it all came together, it feels like one of those **"sneaky Jesus moments"**—the moments when God is quietly working behind the scenes, opening doors and bringing people together before we even realize what He is doing.

It all began in the spring when St. Theresa School hosted our Ignatius Book Fair. At the time, our library was in great need of new books. In fact, we had not been able to purchase new books for our collection since COVID in 2020. Our principal, Ms. Gretchen Watzenour, attended Mass and spoke with parishioners and visitors, inviting them to support the book fair so that the proceeds could be used to purchase new books for our students.

Among those parishioners that weekend were Don and Jennifer Vaske.

Little did Ms. Watsonauer know that Don and Jennifer were also searching for a meaningful way to use their daughter Ava's memorial funds—to honor her life while helping others.

After Mass, Ms. Watsonauer invited Don and Jennifer to tour the school and see some of the improvements that had taken place over the past several years. Jennifer had a special connection to Saint Teresa. She began teaching at St. Theresa in 1998, and all three of her children—Brooklyn, Wade, and Ava—were Saint Theresa students from Pre-K through eighth grade.

As Don and Jennifer walked through the school, they saw how the building had changed and grown. They saw Pre-K move into the school building. They saw our new Little Way Chapel. And they saw the space that was serving as our library.

As they toured the school, something began to stir in their hearts.

They knew.

They felt that this was the place where Ava's memorial could make a lasting difference. This is the story of how our new library came to be!

This library was created with the life, spirit, and personality of Ava Rose Vaske at its heart.

Ava was a beloved student at St. Theresa Catholic School from Pre-K through 8th grade. She loved her school, she loved people, and she especially loved nature and the beauty of the world around her.

One of the beautiful ways Ava's mother, Jennifer Vaske, keeps Ava's spirit alive is through painting rocks in her memory. Each rock features something that reminds people of Ava—her favorite things, her personality, and the adventures she loved, including Disney, Harry Potter, nature, and so much more.

These special "Ava Rocks" have traveled far beyond St. Theresa. Friends, family, and even people who have discovered Ava's story have carried the rocks with them on their own adventures and left them in special places. Ava Rocks have now been left on all seven continents, allowing Ava's joyful spirit to travel around the world.

Jennifer, who taught at St. Theresa for 25 years, also painted the beautiful mural behind the stage in this library. It has a special connection to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, our school's patron saint, who spent time walking through the countryside and woods near her childhood home. The trees and woodland imagery remind us of both Ava's love of nature and the simple, beautiful way St. Thérèse encountered God through creation.

And look closely at her name, Ava Rose.

St. Thérèse is often depicted holding a crucifix surrounded by roses. Roses are one of the most recognizable symbols of St. Thérèse. She is often called “The Little Flower,” and she famously promised that after her death she would send down a “shower of roses”—a symbol of the graces and love she hoped to shower upon the world.

Ava’s middle name, Rose, creates a beautiful connection between Ava and St. Thérèse. Just as St. Thérèse believed that her love could continue to touch people after her life on earth, Ava’s love continues to touch people too. Through these woods, these rocks, and this library.

There is one more special connection woven into Ava’s story.

Ava’s Confirmation sponsor was St. Gianna Beretta Molla.St. Gianna was a physician, wife, and mother who lived her life with extraordinary love for God and for others. She was known for her compassion, her joyful spirit, her dedication to caring for women and children, and her willingness to give of herself completely for those she loved. Today, St. Gianna is a patron saint of mothers, physicians, and unborn children, and she is especially remembered for her care and protection of women and families.It is a beautiful and meaningful part of Ava’s story that St. Gianna was chosen to accompany her as her Confirmation saint.

Throughout this library, you will find little pieces of Ava’s life, her loves, and the people and saints who were part of her story. Ava Rose, St. Thérèse, and St. Gianna are connected here through love, faith, courage, nature, and a life that continues to inspire others.

May everyone who enters this library be reminded to read, wonder, explore, love nature, cherish the little things, and leave a little goodness wherever they go.

This library is more than a room filled with books.

Ava’s story continues—one book, one rock, one adventure, and one rose at a time.

It is a reminder that God is always working—even when we don't see it.

And sometimes, His work begins with something as simple as a book fair.