

2026 NICHE GRADUATION REGISTRATION INFO

Who? 8th grade students, graduating seniors and their guests

What? The 27th Annual NICHE Graduation (Mass, Ceremony, Dinner)

Baccalaureate Mass: *Mass will be celebrated by Fr. Mark Gurtner, Vicar General of the Diocese, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Pictures with Fr. Mark will be taken directly after Mass.*

Commencement Ceremony: *The Commencement Ceremony, including a graduate procession, awarding of diplomas, the tossing of caps, and commencement address will follow the Mass and will take place at St. Mary Mother of God Catholic Church. Fr. Bartholomew Okorie, pastor of St. Peter's Catholic Church & St. Mary Mother of God Church will be our commencement speaker.*

Dinner: *A potluck dinner will follow the ceremony.*

Where? **Mass:** Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (1105 Calhoun St)

Commencement & Dinner: St. Mary Mother of God Catholic Church (1101 Lafayette St)
It is a 2 minute drive between these two locations.

When? **Friday, May 29, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.**

Why? What better way to celebrate the achievements of your student(s) and your homeschool than by attending Mass? How blessed we are as a Catholic homeschool community to be able to celebrate Mass at the hour of Divine Mercy for the past 27 years! Please join us for this memorable day.

Cost? \$30 per graduate by April 1
\$50 per graduate after April 1
\$20 membership dues must be current
\$3 option to have Lora McClamrock design your diploma

How?

REGISTRATION FORM & FEES NEEDED *due April 1*

Registration and online payments can be made on the NICHE website (www.catholichomeschoolers.org). Membership dues can also be paid via the website, if not already current. The registration form takes less than 5 minutes to fill out. Registration forms are due on Wednesday, April 1, 2026. Registration fees increase to \$50 after April 1.

BIO NEEDED *due no later than April 15*

Graduating seniors must e-mail a typed, one paragraph biography *with word count* no later than Wednesday, April 15 to Emily Mondok (emondok6@gmail.com). The purpose of the biography is to allow those attending the ceremony to get to know the graduates a little better. The bio will be read aloud during the Commencement Ceremony and will also be printed in the program. The biography should be written in the 3rd person in paragraph form and *no longer than 150-250 words*.

Here are possible things to include in your student's bio:

- ◆ Family life
- ◆ Hobbies, activities, and areas of interest
- ◆ Present or past jobs and positions held
- ◆ Volunteering or community service positions
- ◆ Scholastic awards, sports awards, scouting achievements
- ◆ Academic areas of interest or specialization during high school
- ◆ Classes taken. If classes were taken outside of the home, please note title and location.
- ◆ Classes the student has particularly enjoyed or personal achievements
- ◆ Extra-curricular activities (sports, dance, music, art, robotics, scouting, etc.)
- ◆ Camps attended
- ◆ Future plans such as work, technical school, school of higher education and area of study with the goal or major listed, whether the student is still discerning future plans, religious life and/or engagement/marriage.
- ◆ Favorite memory/memories of high school

PHOTOS NEEDED *due no later than April 15*

NICHE will be putting together a video slideshow with images of the graduating seniors to be played during the NICHE Commencement Reception. Please send **no more than 6** quality digital or scanned photos in jpg format to **Laura Kaufman** laura@conoza.com no later than Friday, April 25. Pictures will need to include a current headshot as well as photos showing the graduate's interests, families, or childhood. Please be sure that all subjects are dressed in modest clothing.

Important Dates *Mark your calendar!*

April 1: Fees and registration due for early bird pricing

April 15: Senior Biographies due to Emily Mondok (emondok6@gmail.com).

April 15: Senior Photographs due to Laura Kaufman (laura@conoza.com).

May 28 from 1-3 PM Rehearsal at Cathedral/St. Mary's. Parents/siblings needed for set-up.

May 29 at 3:00 Baccalaureate Mass, Graduation Ceremony & Dinner.

Questions?

Contact Emily Mondok (emondok6@gmail.com) or text 260-312-0694. Specific information on the Mass and Rehearsal can be found in the Graduation Mass & Rehearsal document found on the website (www.catholichomeschoolers.org).

FAQ

Do I need to be a NICHE member to participate in graduation?

Yes, you need to be a current NICHE member to register for graduation. Membership is easy and can be done at the time of graduation registration, if necessary. Dues are \$20. If you are not sure whether your membership dues are current, please contact Chris Hudecek at chrishudecek@gmail.com.

What happens during the practice?

A practice is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 1:00 pm. We will start the practice at the Cathedral and then will proceed to St. Mary's to finish. This will last approximately 1 1/2 hours. Parents and capable siblings are needed at St. Mary's to assist with graduation set-up at 1 PM. Set-up includes moving tables & chairs and dressing tables with tablecloths and centerpieces. Carpool arrangements will be made to get graduates from the Cathedral to St. Mary's during rehearsal.

What should my student wear?

Due to the solemnity of this graduation event, all high school graduates are asked to wear caps and gowns during both the Mass and the ceremony. Color choice for the cap and gown is up to the graduate. *Eighth grade students do not wear a cap and gown.* All 8th grade and high school graduates should wear modest dress suitable for Sunday Mass. A cap and gown, as well as the tassel and honor cords may be purchased on the web on Amazon, Jostens, HSLDA, or other internet sites.

Where do graduates sit at Mass?

At the Mass, the graduates will process in and sit together in the front right-hand side of the sanctuary. At the end of Mass, graduates will process down the aisle, immediately following the celebrant.

Can we take pictures?

Yes. After Mass, graduates will be able to assemble for group pictures on the front steps of the Cathedral. The celebrant will be present for individual pictures if his schedule permits. During the graduation ceremony at St. Mary's, opportunities for pictures will be available while diplomas are being handed out and also during the tossing of the caps. Photography is welcome at any time during the graduation ceremony.

How do the logistics of graduation work?

You can drop off crock pots and coolers at St. Mary's before heading to the Cathedral, if you wish. Students will need to arrive at the Cathedral at approximately 2:30. After Mass and pictures, please plan to arrive at St. Mary's between 4:30 and 4:40 pm so the students can start lining up for the ceremonial procession. The ceremony will start no later than 4:45 and will last 30-45 minutes. Dinner is served directly after the ceremony.

Do I need a diploma?

Yes. Parents are responsible for obtaining and presenting a diploma to their graduate at the Commencement Exercise at St. Mary's. Parents will need to bring the diploma to the ceremony. Lora McClamrock (mcclamro@gmail.com) has made very nice diplomas for us in the past. These can be ordered for \$3 at the time of registration and will be delivered at the rehearsal. You can also design or print your own independently. In a pinch, rolling up a piece of paper can serve as a makeshift diploma for pictures. Some parents present their diploma in a frame or diploma cover.

How are the diplomas presented?

When your student's name is called, parents and graduates will all walk to the front and present your diploma. Please remain at the front until the emcee has finished introducing you and reading any senior bios. There will be a brief opportunity for pictures at this time.

How does the dinner work?

Parents are asked to bring 2 heavy hors d'oeuvres for the dinner. Drinks, cake, and paper goods will be provided by NICHE. We anticipate approximately 125 guests for dinner each year and by the end of graduation, everybody is hungry. If you are not intending to stay for the dinner, please be sure to let us know for planning purposes. Erin McCarthy (ek7mcc@gmail.com) will be in touch with more details as we get closer to graduation.

NICHE GRADUATION AT A GLANCE

Event Details

- **Date and Time:** Friday, May 29, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.
- **Locations:**
 - **Mass:** Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1105 Calhoun St
 - **Commencement & Dinner:** St. Mary Mother of God Catholic Church, 1101 Lafayette St

Important Dates

- **April 1, 2026:** Early registration deadline for a reduced fee of \$30 per graduate. Fees increase to \$50 after this date.
- **April 15, 2026:** Deadline for submitting senior biographies and photographs.
- **May 28, 2026:** Rehearsal from 1-3 PM at Cathedral/St. Mary's. Parents and siblings are needed for setup.

Registration and Fees

- **Registration:** Complete the form & pay fees on the website at www.catholichomeschoolers.org.
- **Fees:**
 - \$30 per graduate by April 1
 - \$50 per graduate after April 1
 - \$20 membership dues must be current

Biographies and Photos

- **Biography Submission:** Email a 150-250 word biography to Emily Mondok at emondok6@gmail.com by April 15.
- **Photo Submission:** Send up to 6 photos to Laura Kaufman at laura@conozo.com by April 15.

Event Logistics

- **Dress Code:** High school graduates should wear caps and gowns; 8th graders should wear modest attire suitable for Mass.
- **Diplomas:** Parents are responsible for attaining and presenting the diploma during the Commencement Ceremony.
- **Dinner:** A potluck dinner follows the ceremony. Families are asked to bring two heavy hors d'oeuvres.

Contact Information

- **Questions:** Contact Emily Mondok at emondok6@gmail.com or text 260-312-0694.
- **Additional Information:** Visit the NICHE website at www.catholichomeschoolers.org.