

# Western Maryland Distinctive Scholars excel

In 1918, Bishop James Edward Walsh was assigned as a missionary to the people of China. A century later, three top students from Bishop Walsh School in his hometown of Cumberland were honored as Distinctive Scholars for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Michael Falter, Jiayu “Jenny” Jin and Eden Li traveled over two hours from Cumberland for the 26th annual Distinctive Scholars Convocation, held April 10 at The Catholic High School in Baltimore. They were among 60 seniors recognized – three from each of the 19 archdiocesan high schools, and three who would have graduated from The Seton Keough High School in Baltimore, which closed at the end of the 2016-17 year.

“God has given you different gifts, but he’s given all of us the gift of the Holy Spirit ... to know his will, to discern his will, and to do it always,” Auxiliary Bishop Adam J. Parker said in his reflection during the convocation’s vesper service. “My friends, if you remember nothing else from this evening, please remember that you have been given this gift, and you’re called to use the gift to be his disciples, and to go and make disciples.”

Raymond Kiddy, principal of Bishop Walsh School, said the three students well represent the mission and spirit of Bishop Walsh, and that Jin and Li especially represent his “love for the Chinese culture.”

Jin is one of 12 students participating in Bishop Walsh School’s international program, Sinamericademy, which welcomes students from China to live on campus. She picked up an affinity for tennis, and has found a coach in China with whom she can practice during the summers.

Prior to moving to the United States in her freshman year, Jin knew only basic English. Now, she is not only fluent, but excelling, and plans to stay for college to study mathematics.

Li, whose father leads Sinamericademy, is also on a STEM path – he hopes to study biology on a pre-medicine track – but that does not mean he is without artistic talent. He is a celebrated musician and played the Sultan in “Aladdin Jr.”

Falter challenges himself not only by taking the highest-level classes offered, but also by taking college courses through Allegany Community College. Though a leader in many activities, he is especially fond of track-and-field, where he is a captain and participant in sprinting events.

“Going to Bishop Walsh helped instill a more independent work ethic,” he said, and that it will help him in college where he plans to study computer science or mechanical engineering.

All three commented on the tight-knit community at the school.

“I really love the teachers in Bishop Walsh School,” Jin said. “They make me feel like family.”

Li said that at Bishop Walsh School, the students are able to “build a community with teachers and friends,” and attributed it to the size of the school.