



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admiratione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas K-10 School Newsletter September 25th, 2023

School Mission Statement

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School exists to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Educating in the Eucharistic culture and classical intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church, students are led to encounters with the transcendental good, true, and beautiful. In wonder, confidence, and virtue, students are prepared to engage our broken world for the glory of God, the good of others, and for their own sanctification.

Virtue for the School Year: Faith

- Assenting, through grace, to God's revealed truth

Virtue for Margaret Mary Term: Truthfulness

- Telling the truth when one ought, as one ought



~ Upcoming Events ~

September 25th

October Lunch Orders Due (see below)

September 29th

Michaelmas celebration after Mass; Signatory pages at the back of handbook due; Dress-down day

October 2nd

First day for pants - no shorts

October 4th

Dress-up/Leadership Day

October 6th

First Extraordinary Form School Mass

October 10th

Technology at Home – Presentation and Discussion, 7:00 p.m. (see below)

October 13th

Fall Festival

October 23rd-24th

No school: ICLE Training Days for Teachers

October 25th

Upper (High) School Meeting for Parents, 2:15-3:05, School Library (see below)

October 27th

Last Day of Margaret Mary Term

November 1st

All Saints' Day – No school

November 3rd

No school: Parent-Teacher Conferences

November 10th

Turkey Trot

November 14th

Upper (High) School Open House, 7:00 p.m.



Fifth-Grade Work and Fun!



From the Headmaster

You may have noticed that I was out three days last week. I was attending a principals' retreat and conference run by the Institute of Catholic Liberal Education (ICLE), with whom the diocese is partnering to shift all diocesan schools to a liberal arts approach. It was a packed and fruitful time for me and all the principals as we were introduced to the grounding philosophy and methods of the Catholic liberal arts tradition. I enjoyed a number of good conversations and ideas and questions to ponder.

As a classical school over 5 years "ahead" of most other diocesan schools in this shift, we have already been pursuing key aspects of this new (and ancient) diocesan approach, which include the following:

- Emphasis on pursuing what is true, good, and beautiful for its own sake, rather than in a utilitarian way, such as scoring highly on a test, being prepared to get a good job, etc.
- De-emphasis on testing, data, and measurement, subordinating these to the wholistic, integrated pursuit of wisdom.
- Emphasis on doing a few things well rather than many things in a checklist, cursory fashion.
- Emphasis on "returning to the basics" of listening, memorizing, reading, writing, and discussing.

One of my big takeaways was how much joy and beauty can be had in simplicity. Anyone familiar with educational trends of the last 30+ years can attest to its tendency to "faddism" and increasing busy-ness. While good teaching certainly requires careful planning and crafting, as well as an openness to new approaches, we tend to over-complicate things when we participate in this exhausting, fruitless chase after the latest and greatest in pedagogy. I believe that one motivator in this chase is the desire for control: we want to assure ourselves that our methods are yielding desired, immediate, and tangible "outcomes." One immediate problem with this desire is that it too often leaves little room for the working of the Holy Spirit and the natural "play" of the mind that is needed for it to grow in a natural and fruitful way. As a school, if we ever forget who the primary Teacher is, we have most certainly lost our way, reduced to the state of the "blind leading the blind."

Today at assembly I told the students about our saint for the term, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), whose feast day is on October 16th. She was responsible for spreading the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the creation of the Feast of the Sacred Heart on the octave day of Corpus Christi. She also encouraged First Friday devotions to the Sacred Heart in reparation for sins and outrages against It, such that it is customary for votive Masses to the Sacred Heart to be offered on First Fridays. Hence, our EF Mass on October 6th will be a votive Mass to the Sacred Heart.

Building Security Assessment

In our on-going commitment to implementing meaningful and effective safety protocols, I have invited Sergeant Eugene Rush from the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office back this Thursday to run a security assessment for our building and campus. This will build on the Active Shooter Training we had in August and allow us to continue to reflect on various ways we can keep our children safe. I will be sharing general take-aways from his evaluation via newsletter, as well as hosting a parent meeting for a more detailed summary of his insights. Stay tuned for more information next week.

Upper (High) School Parent Meeting

All parents are invited to attend a meeting specifically focused on updates and information about our upper school. The meeting will begin at 2:15 p.m. with a Divine Mercy Chaplet in the school chapel and proceed to an overview and discussion session in the school library. The purpose of this meeting is as follows:

- To join in prayer for the upper school
- To hear about specific highlights, trends, and stories among the 9th-10th graders
- To see the latest overview of thoughts for next year and the "bigger picture," including our place in the broader diocesan picture
- To hear about our upper school November open house and plans for promotion
- To propose thoughts, feedback, or questions

Your support and input are of great importance to the continued development of a full PreK-12 school. Thank you for making an effort to attend!

Presentation and Discussion Night – Technology at Home

I have included a blurb on this the past couple of weeks. I want to once again encourage you to attend on October 10th. I plan on have childcare available, overseen by a teacher and staffed with middle- and upper-school student volunteers.

Michaelmas!

This Friday after Mass, the students will gather at the playground area for a treat and household pictures in honor of the great feast. I asked them all to pray especially to the archangels this week, and I asked the teachers to hold off on homework in honor of the day.

Tutors

I am re-sending the tutors list, which is much the same as last spring. The arrangement remains the same, with parents negotiating privately with tutors on times and compensation. All tutors on the list have been vetted as school volunteers.

Lunch Orders for October

For October, due to our current volunteer availability, we will be able to offer hot lunch every day except Wednesdays. Mrs. Boes will be opening the lunch ordering on FACTS, which can be accessed through your family portal, under Student > Lunch > Create Web Order (see screenshot below). Please let Mrs. Steffy know if you still are having trouble accessing your portal. **All lunch orders need to be placed through FACTS and are due today!** Among other reasons, this is immensely helpful for our accounting and payment tracking.

