



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admirazione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas PreK-10 School Newsletter

November 20th, 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 Nicholas Term: Patience

- Bearing evil with an equal mind



~ Upcoming Events ~

November 22nd-26th

Thanksgiving Break

December 6th

Dress-up Day

December 8th

Immaculate Conception - No school

December 12th
Art, Poetry, and Music Night, 6:30-8:00 p.m., parish hall

December 15th
EF School Mass (Low Mass)

December 20th
Half day, 11:40 dismissal/Jeans Day

December 21st-January 2nd
Christmas Break

SAVE THE DATE: February 13th
Special Presentation: Zach Good, 6:30-8:30 p.m., parish hall (see below)



Have a Blessed Thanksgiving!

I am deeply grateful for having such wonderful and committed parents at this school! Thank you for your thoughtful service, your care for the school, and for the love and support that you give to your children. Our school culture is built on the solid foundation of our families. God bless you this Thanksgiving!



From the Headmaster

Thank you to all the parents who attended the Parent Association meeting last Wednesday. We are working to improve ways to solicit and organize parent volunteers for our various events at school. Four officers are helping to regularize meeting times, communication, and association finances: Pia Gavigan (president), Bob DiMattia (vice president), Laura Johnson (treasurer), and Laura Hess (secretary). Please see the attached minutes from the latest meeting.

Last Tuesday, we had four prospective families and three current families attend our upper-school open house. Mr. McCoy and I were able to speak about the vision, purpose, and specifics of the school, as well as announce the exciting news about the donor's generous gift covering upper-school tuition for incoming students. It was a great opportunity to attract families who are looking for something more integrated and formative for their children.

Adding an upper school to an existing grade school certainly presents unique challenges. I understand that sometimes the 9th and 10th grades can feel a little separate or tacked on, especially to those not in the school on a daily basis. Nonetheless, the full PreK-10 school is “our” school, something to pray and care for with the good of our own child(ren) in mind. What benefits one level of our school can benefit the whole, and I believe we have an opportunity at St. Thomas to grow something special that will, with time, look and feel more cohesive and natural.

We have already seen the blessings of a classical curriculum; now we have the chance to develop that even further, to become a full PreK-12 school, something that can offer an excellent formation across a span of years that few schools cover. Already, we are seeing its fruits across the entire school, in our wonderful, growing faculty, in the enhancement of the entire curriculum in pursuit of a new goal (graduating seniors in high school, not just 8th graders), and in the witness of our upper schoolers to the younger students. There is an element of adventure in this endeavor, but I do not envision this to be a “high-risk, high-reward” scenario for your son or daughter – at least not high-risk! With the foundation already in place (and growing stronger) in the grade school, the 9th and 10th grades become natural extensions of what came before, though with a new focus suitable to a high-school level. This is what we are already seeing among our upper schoolers, something that Mr. McCoy, their teachers, current upper-school parents, and myself were all able to attest to at the open house.

Of course, being in the midst of a project with growing pains can make it difficult to perceive the larger picture. In light of that, I have asked Zach Good, a teacher/administrator at Sacred Heart Academy in Grand Rapids, to come to St. Thomas on February 13th to present his perspective to parents on growing a classical K-12 school. For those not familiar, Sacred Heart underwent, beginning in 2013, much the same process of transitioning to a classical PreK-12 school as we are currently implementing. Zach was very much at the center of its transition and has many valuable insights on how to navigate the various questions and challenges that inevitably arise along the way. Today, Sacred Heart is very much a “flagship school” for the classical movement among Catholic schools.

This presentation isn’t just for parents currently looking at the upper school. It is for all school parents, since growing to become a PreK-12 school is something that affects all levels and thus involves all of us. **As I did for our technology night last month, I want to make a special request to parents to reserve that date (I once again plan to have childcare available), since this will provide our school community a great chance to listen to and ask questions of someone with a very helpful perspective for our own context.** More details about the evening are forthcoming.

Extraordinary Form School Mass – December 15th

Our next EF school Mass is scheduled. This time a Low Mass will be offered. This is a shorter, quieter form, with sung parts replaced with spoken parts. I will be giving more catechesis and direction on the Mass with the students at assemblies as we prepare for this great opportunity to experience more of the riches of the Church's Tradition. Since they will not be singing for this Mass, our schola, under the direction of Miss De Long, will be scheduled to sing an upcoming Ordinary Form Mass in December.

Registration and Next Open House

As a heads up, registration for the 2024-2025 school year will open in January. Most of the registration process will now be online through FACTS. Also, in January, on MLK Day, we will have our full PreK-10 open house while school is in session for that half day.