



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admirazione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas PreK-10 School Newsletter December 4th, 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 ~

December 6th
Dress-up Day

December 7th
Pick-up for Wreaths, Garlands, Poinsettias, 12-4 in parish hall

December 8th
Immaculate Conception - No school

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

December 13th
Special Performance and Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe, 8 a.m.

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: January 13th
Trivia Night, 6:30-9:30 (doors open at 6), parish hall (see below)

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



Happy Birthday, Pia

Many thanks to Laura Johnson, who graciously coordinated with families and teachers to present paper-flower bouquets to our tireless Parent Association president last Thursday!



Robotics Team Qualifies for States!



From the Headmaster

I am writing today from the hospital. My wife Emma delivered a healthy and beautiful baby girl, Genevieve Therese, at 12:30 a.m. last night and is now trying to rest! Thank you for your prayers.



Congratulations to the Robotics team for a wonderful showing at the competition this past Saturday. They overcame some adversity during the judging and did an excellent job representing the school. Special thanks and recognition to Coach Bob and parent volunteers for raising us to this level in only our second year! The state competition will be held on Saturday, December 16th.

I look forward to our Art, Poetry, and Music Night next Tuesday evening. Please note that this evening is *required* for students as an extension of their classwork. Mr Miller was able to arrange moving the basketball game that night, so I expect to see everyone there for a series of great performances. As a school event, students are still required to follow the instructions of their teachers and behave according to school rules. As in years past, students should dress up for the event.

Parents of 4th-10th graders, as we pass through the middle of the Nicholas Term, please be sure to check student grades on FACTS. Teachers will be working hard to keep you updated. We don't want any surprises when we come back from Christmas break!

As a reminder, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is a Holy Day of Obligation. The school community's participation in the liturgical life of the Church is not a "side-show" to our main focus, but very much at the heart of what we are about. I take seriously the Church's law surrounding Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation,

and that is why I make a point of avoiding, as much as possible, requiring my faculty and staff to work on these days. So the point of our day off really is for the families to focus on this great feast together, and the central part of that, of course, is hearing Mass together!

Next week, we will be commemorating Our Lady of Guadalupe twice. On the actual feast day, December 12th, our schola will sing some of the propers and another piece to promote the solemnity of that day. The following day, the 13th, will see our annual performance of Our Lady's appearance to Juan Diego, put on by our lower school under the direction of Mrs. Lashaway directly before the school Mass.

From the Dean

The upper schoolers continue to press on with Iconography. They have been experiencing the quiet, inner strength that this ancient practice calls out of one who commits to it. We surround the practice of writing icons of St. Gabriel the Archangel with much silence so that that quiet, inner strength - so necessary to discover as a young person - can develop, like a furnace gathering heat. It is this interior strength that grants the ability to truly *achieve* something. And this is what these young guys are made for: to grow in their ability to achieve, and to achieve the breaking-in of the sacramental presence of God into the world. Iconography has been challenging this year, but the upper schoolers are beginning to experience the fruits and growth of those challenges.

In addition, we began a new Immersive Mission in November: Garment-Making. The goal of this mission is for each student to produce a confessional stole for one of the seminarians who are being ordained to the priesthood in June for the Archdiocese of Detroit. On November 8th we travelled out to Sacred Heart Seminary to meet these gentlemen, with each of our students interviewing them and getting to know them a bit. Now we are engaging with the task of actually making the stoles. The purpose of this is not simply for the guys to learn how to sew (to give them a "life skill", as it were). The purpose of this mission is to give these guys a way to give of themselves to bless another person; to give them a mission and a way of love within the Church. These things are so essential for young people to encounter. Moreover, there also has been a great deal of camaraderie amongst the guys as they set of trying to do this together.

The upper schoolers also continue to journey along the way of prayer. Over the past month the theme has been "The Call". We have meditated, in many ways, on passages that help us hear and face the call of God: to live for Him, to choose Him, to put to death the reign of sin in us, to embrace the way of prayer more wholeheartedly, etc. We have drawn meditations from St. Benedict, St. Ignatius, St. Anthony of the Desert, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. Honoratus. Now we are turning towards more explicitly meditating upon the life of Jesus, seeking that precious gift

of "an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love Him more and follow Him more closely" (St. Ignatius). We have also been introducing Ignatius's Discernment of Spirits, which is an essential tool in the spiritual life.

As the Dean, I have also been regularly meeting one-on-one with each upper schooler (and some middle schoolers) to help them grow spiritually, to help them understand themselves better, to mentor them, and to help them in whatever difficulties they might be facing; to challenge and encourage them. I do all of this in collaboration and communication with their parents so that each kid can receive the shepherding they need.

Other things that I have been helping out with: recruiting new students for the upper school, playing music with the upper schoolers, helping with both the guys and girls middle school households, teaching a Scripture class for the 10th graders, running the physical training aspect of the upper school, taking the upper schoolers on a silent missionary walk into Ann Arbor, and spending dedicated time in the chapel praying for the school and all of its students.

That's enough for one newsletter!

Trivia Night Benefitting the School

St. Thomas is hosting its inaugural Trivia Night on January 13, 2024, from 6:30-9:30 in the parish hall! This presents our school an opportunity to provide a St. Thomas parish-wide evening to build community and support for our school. Funds raised will be directed to classroom libraries and school beautification.

In this, we are asking for the school families to give with their time and talent, generously! We will be circulating in the upcoming newsletters a sign-up genius to bring food to provide, namely meat & cheese trays, cracker trays, fruit & vegetable trays. We are also asking for volunteers to set up and clean up, as well as for middle and upper school students to be runners between rounds with score sheets and water pitcher refills. Lastly, if you have items you make or own that could be used for a raffle between rounds or for a live auction at halftime, please let Ruth Atzinger or Sarah Meinhart know (such as bread, cakes, crafts, Irish gear, Catholic books, etc.).

Thank you in advance for your support of this event! Go Irish!

Join WESO! – Grades 2-5

WESO (Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad) is a fun and exciting opportunity for kids grades 2-5 to gain knowledge and experience in a science-related field. Students can choose one event (or more!) to participate in with their friends.

However, we need parent volunteer coaches in order to form our team. Time commitment and location is decided by each coach, but typical expectations are about an hour a week. Practices would not start until mid-late January. The competition is April 20th.

Please respond to Emma Sauter (sautern@gmail.com) by **December 15th** with any questions, or if you are interested in joining. If we have enough interest, I will send out a survey later for event selection. See <https://wesoscience.org/> for more information.

Parking Reminder

As a reminder, the 15-minute parking at the bottom of the hill on Elizabeth St. is for pick-up and drop-off throughout the school day. Please do not use that space if you suspect you'll be in school for 15 minutes or more.